

Children's Department

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Fairy tales from India

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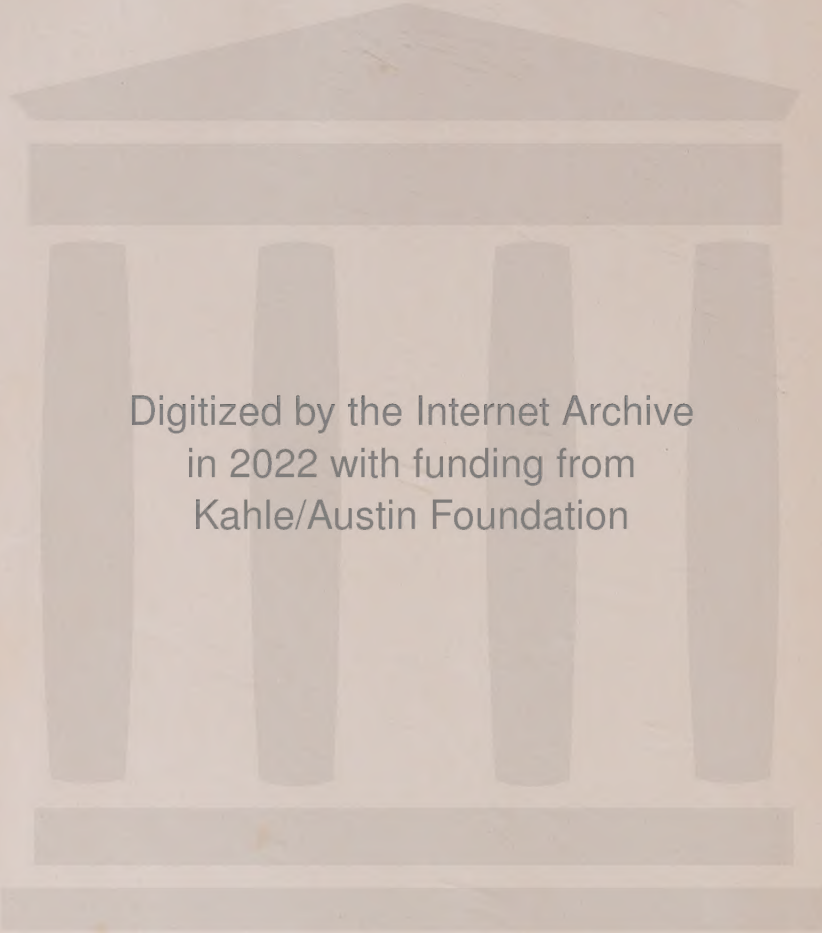


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FAIRY TALES FROM INDIA

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FAR, FAR THEY FLEW, AS FAST AS PARROTS CAN FLY, OVER HILLS, OVER FORESTS, OVER RIVERS

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FAIRY TALES FROM INDIA

EDITED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
KATHARINE PYLE



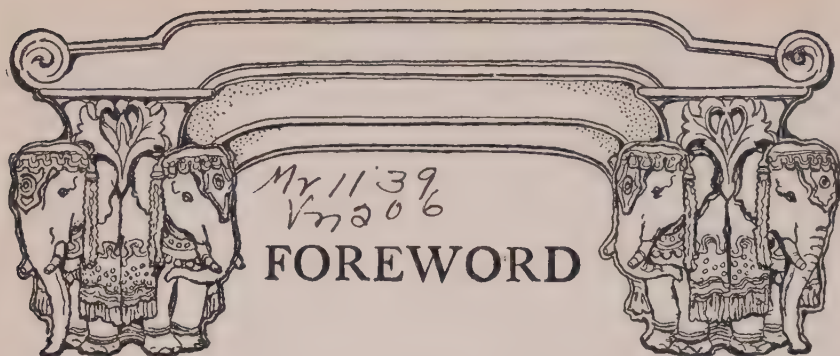
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1926



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IT WAS more than fifty years ago that a little book called "*Old Deccan Days*" was published in Philadelphia by the J. B. Lippincott Company. It was a book of the fairy tales of Southern India. Very, very old were the stories in that book; they had been told and re-told by the people of that far-off land for generation after generation. For hundreds of years mothers had been telling them to their children, and they in turn to their children and their children's children, and even grown people had often gathered round to listen eagerly to those tales.

Then one time an Englishman heard them, and wrote them down in his own language, and they were printed in a book so that English-speaking people could know them, too.

Very few copies of "*Old Deccan Days*" are left now, and few of the boys and girls of these times know anything about the stories; but when I was a child I was so fortunate as to own one of the books,

and what a wonderful fairyland it opened to me; one different from that of any other nation. It was a fairyland of Rajahs and Ranees instead of Kings and Queens, a land of pomegranates and mangoes and of banyan trees; of glittering temples and gilded idols, and great jungles where tigers and other savage creatures roared at night. There clever little jackals outwitted larger and fiercer beasts, and human beings, too; cobras owned vast treasures and magic palaces; and beautiful Nautch girls danced with tinkling bangles, and demon Rakshas kept their stolen wealth in castles, or disguised themselves as old women with matted hair, and hid away in huts deep in the jungles.

One or two of these tales were too cruel for the children of our land to care for them, but the most of them were only strange and beautiful, perhaps funny. Some few have already been re-published in other volumes—collections of fairy tales drawn from many different sources*; but now, for the first time in this book, “Fairy Tales From India,” twelve of them are re-printed without any other stories in among them, and by that same Lippincott Company that published “Old Deccan Days” so many years ago.

* Collections published by Little, Brown & Company and E. P. Dutton & Company.

So now the children of this later day may, if they choose, read those same stories, that opened the fairyland of India to other children more than half a century ago.

KATHARINE PYLE

NOTE

In preparing these stories for re-publication it has seemed best to change them slightly, in order to fit them to the modern ideas of children's literature. The editor has been careful, however, to follow the narratives as closely as seemed advisable, and to do nothing that would affect the real thread of the story



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THE JACKAL, THE BARBER AND THE BRAHMIN WHO HAD SEVEN DAUGHTERS

A BARBER and a Jackal once struck up a great friendship with each other, and it might have lasted to this day had not the Jackal been too clever for the Barber, and too fond of playing tricks upon him.

The Jackal was, indeed, no common animal, but a Rajah who had the power to take at any time whatever shape he chose. As he was very fond of adventures he would often change himself into some beast or bird, and so journey off into other countries to see how the people lived, and what they were doing.

One day the Rajah Jackal said to the Barber, "It would be a nice thing for us to have a garden of our own, in which we might grow as many cucumbers, pumpkins and melons as we like. Why should we not buy one?"

The Barber answered, "Very well; here is money. Do you go and buy a garden." So the Jackal took the Barber's money, and with it bought a fine garden, in which were cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, figs, and many other good fruits and vegetables. And he used to go there every day and feast to his heart's content. When, however, the Barber said to him,

"What is the garden like which you bought with the money I gave you?" he answered, "There are very fine plants in it, but there is no fruit upon them; when the fruit is ripe I will let you know." This reply satisfied the Barber, who inquired no further at that time.

A little while afterward, the Barber again asked the Jackal about the garden, saying, "I see you go down to that garden every day; is the fruit getting ripe?" "Oh dear no, not yet," answered the Jackal; "why, the plants are only just coming into blossom."

But all this time there was a great deal of fruit in the garden, and the Jackal was going there every day and eating all he wanted.

Again, a third time, when some weeks had passed, the Barber said to him, "Is there no ripe fruit in our garden yet?" "No," said the Jackal; "the blossoms have only just fallen, but the fruit is forming. In time we shall have a fine show of melons and figs there."

Then the Barber began to think the Jackal was deceiving him, and determined to see and judge for himself. So the next day, without saying anything about it, he followed him down to the garden.

Now it happened that very day the Jackal had invited all his animal friends to come and feast there. All the beasts that lived in the neighboring jungle

had accepted the invitation; there they came trooping by hundreds and dozens, and were very merry indeed—running here and there, and eating all the melons and cucumbers and figs and pumpkins in the place.

The Barber peeped over the hedge, and saw the assembled wild beasts, and his friend Jackal entertaining them—talking to this one, laughing with that, and eating with all. The good man did not dare to attack the intruders, as they were many and powerful. But he went home at once, very angry, muttering to himself, “ I’ll be the death of that young jackanapes; he shall play no more pranks in my garden.” And watching his opportunity, he returned there when the Jackal and all his friends had left, and tied a long knife under the leaves of the largest of the cucumbers that still remained; then he went home, and said nothing of what he had seen.

Early the next morning the Jackal thought to himself, “ I’ll just run down to the garden and see if there are any cucumbers or melons left.” So he went there, and quickly spying the large cucumber he ran over to eat it, but the long knife that was hidden among the leaves ran into him, cutting him badly.

“ Ah, that nasty Barber!” he cried, “ this must

be his doing!" And instead of going home he ran as fast as he could very far, far away into the jungle.

There he stayed, feeding on roots and berries, until the cuts healed and he was well again. Then he began to think of what he could do to make a living. He was afraid to return to the Barber's house, he had no money to buy food, and no one would give it to him. Then a clever plan came into his head. There had been a heavy rain the day before, and down in a hollow there was a great deal of soft mud. He gathered a quantity of this and packed it in a small chattee; then he covered the top of it very carefully with leaves, as people do with jars of fresh butter, and took it into a neighboring village to sell.

At the door of one of the first houses to which he came stood a woman, to whom the Jackal said, "Mahi, here is butter—beautiful fresh butter! won't you buy some fresh butter?" She answered, "are you sure it is quite fresh? Let me see it." But he replied, "It is perfectly fresh; but if you open the chattee now, it will be all spoilt by the time you want it. If you like to buy it, you may take it; if not, I will sell it to some one else." The woman did want some fresh butter, and the chattee the Jackal carried on his head was carefully fastened up, as if what it contained was of the best; and she knew if she

opened it, it might spoil before her husband returned home; besides, she thought, if the Jackal had intended to deceive her, he would have been more pressing in asking her to buy it. So she said, "Very well, give me the chattee; here is money for you. You are sure it is the best butter?" "It is the best of its kind," answered the Jackal, "only be sure you put it in some cool place, and don't open it till it is wanted." And taking the money, he ran away.

A short time afterward the woman opened the chattee and at once saw how she had been cheated, and was very angry; but the Jackal was by that time far away, out of reach of punishment.

It was not long before all the money the woman had given him was spent, and he again began to puzzle over how he was to get food.

Fortunately for him, just then one of the bullocks belonging to the village died. The Jackal found it lying dead by the road-side, and he began to eat it, and ate and ate so much that at last he had got too far into the animal's body to be seen by passersby. Now the weather was hot and dry. Whilst the Jackal was in it, the bullock's skin crinkled up so tightly with the heat that it became too hard for him to bite through, and so he could not get out again.

The Mahars of the village all came out to bury the dead bullock. The Jackal, who was inside it,

feared that if they caught him they would kill him, and that if they did not discover him, he would be buried alive; so on their approach he called out, "People, people, take care how you touch me, for I am a great saint." The poor people were very much frightened when they heard the dead bullock talking, and thought that some mighty spirit must indeed possess it. "Who are you, sir, and what do you want?" they cried. "I," answered the Jackal, "am a very holy saint. I am also the god of your village, and I am very angry with you because you never worship me nor bring me offerings." "O my Lord," they cried, "what offerings will please you? Tell us only, and we will bring you whatever you like." "Good," he replied. "Then you must fetch here plenty of rice, plenty of flowers and a nice fat chicken; place them as an offering beside me, and pour a great deal of water over them and over me, too, as you do at your most solemn feasts, and I will forgive you your sins." The Mahars did as they were commanded. They placed some rice and flowers, and the best chicken they could procure, beside the bullock, and poured water over the offering and over the dead bullock. Then, no sooner did the dry, hard bullock's skin get wetted than it split in many places, and to the surprise of all his worshippers, the Jackal jumped out, seized the chicken in his mouth, and ran away

with it through the midst of them into the jungle. The Mahars ran after him over hedges and ditches for many, many miles, but he got away in spite of them all.

On, on he ran—on, on, for a very long way—until at last he came again to the village where the Barber lived, and there for sometime he used to prowl round the houses every night and live upon any bones that he could find. The villagers did not like his coming, and tried to catch him, but never succeeded, till one night his old friend the Barber (who had never forgiven him for stealing the fruits and melons) caught him in a net which he had arranged very cleverly in the garden.

“Aha!” cried the Barber. “I have you at last my friend. You will steal no more from me and the other villagers.” Then he called, “Wife! wife! come and see what a prize I’ve caught.” The Barber’s wife came running to the door, and the Barber gave her the Jackal (after he had tied all his four legs firmly together with a strong rope), and said to her, “Take him into the house, and be sure you don’t let him escape, while I go get a knife to kill him with.”

The Barber’s wife did as she was bid, and taking the Jackal into the house, laid him down on the floor. But no sooner had the Barber gone than the Jackal said to her, “Ah, good woman, your husband will

return directly and put me to death. For the love of heaven, **U**loosen the rope round my feet before he comes, for one minute only, and let me drink a little water from that puddle by the door, for my throat is parched with thirst." "No, no, friend Jackal," answered the Barber's wife. "I know well enough what you'll do. No sooner shall I have untied your feet than you will run away, and when my husband returns and finds you are gone, he will beat me."

"Never think such a thing!" he replied. "Ah, kind mother, have pity on me, only for one little moment." Then the Barber's wife thought, "Well, it is hard not to grant the poor beast's last request; he will not live long enough to have many more pleasures." So she untied the Jackal's legs and held him by a rope, that he might drink from the puddle. But quick as possible, he gave a jump and a twist and a pull, and, jerking the rope out of her hand, escaped once more into the jungle.

For sometime after this he roamed about, always further and further from the village where the Barber lived, until he came into quite a different country.

One day, by chance, he passed by a hut in which lived a very poor Brahmin, who had seven daughters. The Brahmin was talking aloud to himself, so that the Jackal heard what he was saying, "Oh dear, oh dear!" he said, "what can I do for my seven daughters.

I shall have to provide for them all my life, for they are much too poor ever to get married, and where I am to get food for them, I'm sure I don't know. If even a jackal were to ask me for one of them, he should have her."

Next day the Jackal called on the Brahmin, and said to him, "You said yesterday that if even a jackal were to ask for one of your daughters he should have her. Will you keep your word, and give me your eldest daughter to keep house for me? If you will, I promise to be kind to her, and give her everything in the world that she needs."

The Brahmin hardly knew what answer to make to this, for when he had said what he did, he had no idea he would ever be called upon to keep his promise. However, just then all the seven daughters began to cry for food, and the father, knowing he had nothing to give them, said to the Jackal, "Very well! You shall have my eldest daughter, but be sure you treat her well, or it will be the worse for you."

He then called the girl out of the house, and as soon as the Rajah Jackal saw her he was delighted, for she was very beautiful, and looked good and gentle, as well. So he took her home to his den well content with his bargain.

Now this den looked from the outside just like a common hole in the rocks, but inside it had been

turned into a magnificent palace, adorned with gold and silver and ivory and precious stones. This the Rajah Jackal had done by means of his magic powers. The Brahmin's daughter was amazed when she saw it. She could not understand how a Jackal came to be living in such a place. For the Rajah never showed himself to her in his true shape. He always kept on his Jackal skin when he was with her, only in the very early morning, while she was still asleep, he would go outside and take it off and wash and brush it, and then put it on again. Still the girl was well content, for he was very kind to her, and gave her everything she wanted.

So they lived together for some time very happily, and then one day the Rajah Jackal saw the old Brahmin coming up the hill toward the den. He was much vexed at this. "Here comes your father," said he to the girl. "No doubt he has come here to beg, but I shall not allow him to come inside. So when the Brahmin arrived he found the Jackal sitting on a rock outside the mouth of the den.

"Son-in-law," the Brahmin said, "Let me come into your cave and rest a little while. I want to ask you to help me, for I am very poor and greatly in need of assistance."

"Don't go into my cave," said the Jackal; "it is but a poor hole, not fit for you to enter, but I will

call your daughter, that you may see I have not eaten her, and she and you and I will talk over the matter, and see what we can do for you."

So the Brahmin, the Brahmin's daughter, and the Jackal all sat down on the hillside together, and the Brahmin said, "I don't know what to do to get food for myself, my wife and my six other daughters. Cannot you help me?"

"It will be a difficult matter," answered the Jackal, "but I'll do what I can for you." He then went into the cave and fetched a large melon which he gave to the Brahmin."

"Take this," he said, and plant it in the garden, and when it grows, sell all the fruit you find upon it. It will bring you as much and more money than you need."

So the Brahmin took the melon home with him and planted it in his garden. By the next day a plant had grown up from it, covered with hundreds of beautiful ripe melons. The Brahmin, his wife and family were overjoyed at the sight. And all the neighbors were astonished, and said, "How fast that fine melon plant has grown in the Brahmin's garden!"

Now it chanced that a woman who lived in a house close by wanted some melons, and seeing what fine ones these were, she went down at once to the Brahmin's house and bought two or three from the

Brahmin's wife. She took them home with her and cut them open; but, lo and behold! marvel of marvels! what a wonderful sight astonished her! Instead of the thick white pulp she expected to see, the whole of the inside of the melon was composed of diamonds, rubies and emeralds, and all the seeds were enormous pearls. She immediately locked her door, and taking with her all the money she had, ran back to the Brahmin's wife and said to her, "Those were very good melons you sold me; I like them so much that I will buy all the others on your melon plant." And giving her the money, she took the rest of the melons away with her. Now this cunning woman told none of her friends of the treasure she had found, and the poor, stupid Brahmin and his family did not know what they had lost, for they never thought of opening any of the melons; so that for all the precious stones they had sold they only got a few pieces of money, which was very hard. Next day, when they looked out of the window, the melon plant was again covered with fine ripe melons, and again the woman came and bought them all. And this went on for several days. There were so many melons, and all the melons were so full of precious stones, that the woman who bought them had enough to fill the whole of one room in her house with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls.

At last, however, the wonderful plant began to wither and one morning when the woman came to buy melons, the Brahmin's wife said to her, in a sad voice, "Alas! there are no more melons on our melon plant." And the woman went back to her own house very much disappointed.

That day the Brahmin and his wife and children had no money in the house to buy food with, and they all felt very unhappy to think that the fine melon plant had withered. But the Brahmin's youngest daughter, who was a clever girl, thought, "Though there are no more melons fit to sell on our melon plant, perhaps I may be able to find one or two shriveled ones, which, if cooked, will give us something for dinner." So she went out to look, and searching carefully amongst the thick leaves, found two or three withered little melons still remaining.

These she took into the house and began cutting them up to cook, when—more wonderful than wonderful!—within each little melon she found a number of small emeralds, rubies, diamonds and pearls! The girl called her father and mother, and her five sisters, crying, "See what I have found! See these precious stones and pearls. I dare say inside all the melons we sold there were as good or better than these. No wonder that woman was so anxious to buy them all! See, father—see, mother—see sisters!"

Then they were all overjoyed to see the treasure, but the Brahmin said, "What a pity we have lost all the good of the Jackal's gift by not knowing its worth! I will go at once to that woman, and try to make her give us back the melons she took."

So he went to the melon-buyer's house, and said to her, "Give me back the melons you took from me. My wife knew nothing of their value when she sold them." She answered, "I don't know what you mean." He replied, "You were very deceitful, you bought melons full of precious stones from us poor people, who did not know what was in them, and you only paid for them the price of common melons; give me some of them back, I pray you." But she said, "I bought common melons from your wife, and made them all into common soup long ago; therefore, talk no further nonsense about jewels, but go about your business." And she turned him out of the house. Yet all this time she had a whole roomful of the emeralds, diamonds, rubies and pearls that she had found in the melons the Brahmin's wife had sold her.

The Brahmin returned home and said to his wife, "I cannot make that woman give me back any of the melons you sold her; but give me the precious stones our daughter has just found, and I will sell them to a jeweler and bring home some money."

So he went to the town, and took the precious stones to a jeweler, and said to him, "What will you give me for these?" But no sooner did the jeweler see them than he said, "How could such a poor man as you become possessed of such precious stones? You must have stolen them; you are a thief! You have stolen these from my shop, and now come to sell them to me!"

"No, no, sir; indeed no, sir," cried the Brahmin. "But you did," cried the jeweler, and he began shouting, "Thief, thief!" "In truth, no sir," said the Brahmin, "the Jackal, that lives upon the hill, and is my son-in-law, gave me a melon plant, and in one of the melons I found these jewels." "I don't believe a word you say," screamed the jeweler (and he began beating the Brahmin, whom he held by the arm); "give up those jewels which you have stolen from my shop." "No, I won't," roared the Brahmin, "oh! oh-o! oh-o-o! don't beat me so; I didn't steal them." But the jeweler was determined to get the jewels; so he beat the Brahmin and called the police, who came running up to his help and he kept on shouting till a great crowd of people gathered round his shop. Then he said to the Brahmin, "Give me up the jewels you stole from me, or I'll give you to the police, and you shall be put in jail." The Brahmin tried to tell his story about the Jackal who was his son-in-law, but, of course,

nobody believed him; and he was obliged to give the precious stones to the jeweler in order to escape the police. Then he ran home as fast as he could, and every one thought the jeweler was very kind to let him off so easily.

All his family were very unhappy when they heard what had befallen him. But his wife said, "You had better go again to the Jackal, and see what he can do for us." So next day the Brahmin climbed the hill again, as he had done before, and went to call upon the Jackal. When the Jackal saw him coming he went to meet him, and said, "Father in-law, I did not expect to see you again so soon." "I merely came to see how you are," answered the Brahmin, "and to tell you how poor we are; and how glad we should be of any help you can give us." "What have you done with all the melons I gave you?" asked the Jackal. "Ah," answered the Brahmin, "that is a sad story!" And beginning at the beginning, he told how they had sold almost all the melons without knowing their value; and how the few precious stones they had found had been taken from him by the jeweler. When the Jackal heard this he laughed very much, and said, "I see it is no use to give gold or jewels to such unfortunate people as you, for they will only bring you into trouble. Come I'll give you a more useful present." So, running into his cave, he fetched



HE FETCHED A SMALL CHATTEE AND GAVE IT TO THE BRAHMIN

thence a chattee, and gave it to the Brahmin, saying, "Take this chattee; whenever you or any of your family are hungry, you will always find in it as good a dinner as this." And putting his paw into the chattee, he took from it currie and rice, pilau, and all sorts of good things, enough to feast a hundred men; and the more he took out of the chattee, the more remained inside.

When the Brahmin saw this and smelt the good dinner, his eyes glistened for joy; and he embraced the Rajah Jackal, saying, "Dear son-in-law, you are the only help we have." And he took his new present carefully home with him.

After this, for some time, the whole family led a very happy life, they never lacked good food; for every day the Brahmin, his wife and six daughters found inside the chattee a most delicious dinner; and every day after they had dined, they placed the chattee on a shelf, and always when they took it down it was again full of food.

Now it happened that nearby lived another Brahmin, a very great man, who was much in the confidence of the Rajah of that country. Every day, at dinner time, the rich Brahmin smelled the smell of most delicious food; it smelt even nicer than his own dinner, for which he had paid so much, and always it seemed to come from the house of his poor

neighbor. At last he determined to find out all about it; so he went to call on his neighbor, and said to him, "Every day, at about twelve o'clock, I smell such a very nice dinner—much nicer than my own; and the smell seems to come from your house. You must live on very good things, I think, although you seem to every one to be so very poor."

Then, in the pride of his heart, the poor Brahmin invited his rich neighbor to come and dine with him, and lifting the magic chattee down from the shelf, he took out of it such delicate fare as the other had never before tasted. And in an evil hour he told the rich Brahmin of the wondrous power of the chattee, which the Jackal had given him, and how it never was empty. No sooner had the great man learnt all this than he went to the Rajah, and said to him, "There is a poor Brahmin in the town who possesses a wonderful chattee, which is always filled with the most delicious dinner. I had not myself the right to take it from him, but if it pleased your Highness to take it, he could not complain." The Rajah, hearing this, determined to see this thing himself and to taste the dinner the chattee provided. So he went with the rich Brahmin to the poor Brahmin's house. The poor Brahmin was overjoyed at being noticed by the Rajah himself, and gladly showed what the chattee could do; but no sooner had the Rajah tasted the

dinner it contained than he ordered his guards to seize the chattee and take it away to the palace, in spite of the Brahmin's tears and prayers. Thus, the foolish man lost the second of the Jackal's gifts.

When the Rajah had gone, the Brahmin said to his wife, "There is nothing to be done but to go again to the Jackal, and see if he can help us."

"If you don't take care you'll put him out of all patience at last," answered she. "I can't think why you should have talked about our chattee!"

When the Jackal heard the Brahmin's story, he became very cross, and said, "What a stupid old man you were to say anything about my gift! But see, here is another chattee which may aid you to get back the first. Take care of it, for this is the last time I will help you." And he gave the Brahmin a chattee, in which was a stout stick tied to a very strong rope. "Take this," he said, "into the presence of those who took from you my other gifts and when you open it, command the stick to beat them; this it will do so thoroughly that they will gladly return you what you have lost; only take care not to open the chattee when you are alone, or the stick that is in it will punish your rashness."

The Brahmin thanked his son-in-law, and took away the chattee, but he found it hard to believe all that had been said. So, as he went through the jungle

on his way home, he uncovered it, just to peep in and see if the stick were really there. No sooner had he done this than out jumped the stick; the rope seized him and bound him to a tree, and the stick beat him, and beat him, and beat him, until he was nearly killed. "Oh dear! oh dear!" cried the Brahmin; "what an unlucky man I am! Oh dear! oh dear! stop, please stop! good stick, stop! what a very strong stick this is!" But the stick would not stop, but beat him so much that he could hardly crawl home again.

Then the Brahmin put the rope and stick back again into the chattee, and sent to his rich neighbor and to the Rajah, and said to them, "I have a new chattee, much better than the old one; do come and see what a fine one it is." And the rich Brahmin and the Rajah thought, "This is something good; doubtless there is a choice dinner in this chattee also, and we will take it from this foolish man, as we did the other." So they went down to meet the Brahmin in the jungle, taking with them all their followers and attendants. Then the Brahmin uncovered his chattee, saying, "Beat stick, beat! beat them every one!" and the stick jumped out, and the rope jumped out, and the rope caught hold of the Rajah and the rich Brahmin and all their attendants, and tied them fast to the trees that grew around. Then the stick ran

from one to another, beating, beating, beating—beating the Rajah, beating his courtiers—beating the rich Brahmin, beating his attendants, and beating all their followers; while the poor Brahmin cried with all his might, “Give me back my chattee! Give me back my chattee!”

The Rajah and his people were very much frightened, and thought they would certainly be killed. And the Rajah cried to the Brahmin, “Take away your stick, only take your stick away, and you shall have back your chattee.” So the Brahmin put the stick and rope back in the chattee, and the Rajah returned to him the dinner-making chattee. And all the people felt very much afraid of the Brahmin, and respected him very much.

Then he took the chattee containing the rope and stick to the house of the woman who had bought the melons, and the rope caught her and the stick beat her; and the Brahmin cried, “Give back my jewels! Give back my jewels!” And the woman cried, “Only make your stick stop beating me and you shall have back all the jewels.” So he ordered the stick back into the chattee, and she returned them to him forthwith—a whole roomful of diamonds, pearls, emeralds and rubies.

The Brahmin took them home to his wife, and going into the town, with the help of his good stick,

he also forced the jeweler who had taken from him the little emeralds, rubies, diamonds and pearls, to give them back to him again. Then, having done all this, he returned to his family, and from that time they all lived very happily.

Then, one day, the Jackal's wife invited her six sisters to come and pay her a visit. Now the youngest sister was more clever than any of the others, and she suspected there was some secret about the pretended Jackal. So one morning when he stole out early to wash and brush his Jackal skin, she followed him and saw all that was done; and she saw as he stood there in his true form that he was one of the handsomest young Rajah's in the world. She waited until he had hung the skin up to dry, and then she stole it and threw it in the fire and burned it.

After that she woke her sister, "Sister! sister!" she cried, "Come and look outside, for your husband is standing there, and he is one of the handsomest princes that ever was seen."

So the eldest sister came and looked, and having looked was very, very happy because she had such a beautiful young man for a husband.

And now that the Jackal skin was burned the Rajah could no longer hide himself in it, and he told her how he had taken that shape in order to amuse himself by wandering about the world and living as

other jackals lived. But now that he had taken his human form, they would journey back to his kingdom and she should be his Ranee there. This they did, and afterward he sent for the old Brahmin and his wife and his six daughters, and gave them all high positions in his court, and they lived happy for all the rest of their lives.

II

A FUNNY STORY

ONCE upon a time there was a Ranee who was greatly grieved because she had no children, and there was a little dog in the palace that had no puppies.

One day the little dog ran out into the jungle, and there she found two beautiful little girls who had been deserted and left there by their parents. The little dog was overjoyed when she found the children, and she carried them home and cared for them tenderly.

The servants were amused at this, and told their Ranee about it and she became very curious to see the children, so she ordered that they should be brought to her. This was done, and when the Ranee saw the little girls they were so beautiful that she determined to keep them for her own.

The little dog was much grieved when the children were taken from her, so she watched until she had a chance to steal them, and then she carried them back again to the jungle. There she made a home for them in a pretty cave in a rock beside a clear stream; every day she ran to the town and hunted about until she found something nice to eat, and then she brought it back to the children, and if she

found any pretty clothes and jewels which she could carry in her mouth, she brought them also.

Now it happened that some time after this two young Princes, a Rajah and his brother, came to hunt in the forest. The little dog was away at the time, for she had gone to the town for food. The Princes hunted all morning but found nothing. So they sat down to rest under a tree, and as they were hot and thirsty, they bade their attendants search about for water and bring them some but no one could find any. At last one of the hunting dogs came back to the tree quite muddy, and the Rajah said, "Look, the dog is muddy ; he must have found water : follow him, and see where he goes." The attendants followed the dog, and saw him go to the stream at the mouth of the cave where the two girls were. The girls were frightened at sight of the attendants, and quickly hid themselves, but the attendants had already seen them, and when they returned to the two Princes they said, "We have found clear sparkling water that flows past a cave, and in this cave are two of the most lovely young ladies that eye ever beheld, and they are clothed in fine dresses and covered with jewels, but when they saw us they were frightened, and hid away." On hearing this the Princes bade their servants lead them to the place, and when they saw the girls they were enchanted by their beauty,

and asked them to go to their kingdom and become their wives. The maidens at first refused but afterward the Rajah and his brother persuaded them to come, and then they took the girls up on their horses and rode away with them.

Not long after this the little dog returned, and when she found the cave empty and the children gone she was grieved to the heart. At once she set out in search of them, and for twelve long years she ran from place to place, seeking everywhere, but never finding them. At last she came to the city where the two Princesses lived. Now it chanced that the eldest, the wife of the Rajah, was looking from the window, and seeing the dog she cried out, "That is the dear kind dog that cared for my sister and me when we were children."

At once she ran out into the street and called to the dog and took her up in her arms, and brought her into her own room. There she made a comfortable bed for her, and bathed her feet, and was very kind to her. Then the dog said, "You are good and kind, and it is a great joy to me to see you again; but now I must go and see your sister also. After I have seen her, and made sure she is well and happy I will return."

The Ranee answered, "Do not go now, but rest here until to-morrow. Then I will send and let my

sister know, and she will come to see you." But the dog would not listen to her, but ran off to the palace of the second sister. The Princess was looking from the window when the dog came to the door, and seeing the little creature she said to herself, "That must be the dog that found me in the jungle, and afterwards took care of me. What will my husband think if he learns of this." And she ordered the servants to go out and throw stones at the dog, and drive her away. This the servants did, at the same time shouting, "Go away! Go away, you wretched creature! Our mistress does not like dogs."

The poor creature's heart was almost broken with sorrow at this, and she ran back to the elder sister's house and the Ranee saw her coming, and went out to meet her, and brought her in and cared for her tenderly. But the little dog soon died of grief, for she was very old at any rate.

The Ranee thought her husband might be vexed if he found a dead dog (an unclean animal) in the palace; so she put the body in a small room into which the Rajah hardly ever went, intending to have it reverently buried; and over it she placed a basket topsy-turvy.

It so happened, however, that when the Rajah came to visit his wife, he chanced to pass through this very room; and tripping over the upturned

basket, called for a light to see what it was. Lo and behold! there lay the statue of a dog, life size, and made entirely of diamonds, emeralds, and other precious stones, set in gold! At once he called out to his wife, and said, "Where did you get this beautiful image of a dog?" But when the Ranee saw the golden dog, she was very much frightened, and, instead of telling her husband the truth, she told a story, and said, "Oh, it is only a present my parents sent me."

"Only!" said the Rajah, "why this is valuable enough to buy the whole of my kingdom. Your parents must be very rich people to be able to send you such presents as this. How is it you never told me of them? Where do they live?" (Now she had to tell another story to cover the first.) She said, "In the jungle." He replied, "I will go and see them; you must take me and show where they live." Then the Ranee thought, "What will the Rajah say when he finds I have been telling him such stories? He will order my head to be cut off." So she said, "You must first give me a palanquin, and I will go into the jungle and tell them you are coming." But really she determined to kill herself, and so get out of her difficulties. Away she went; and when she had gone some distance in her palanquin, she saw a large white ants' nest, over which hung a cobra* with its mouth wide

* A Poisonous Snake.

open; then the Ranee thought, "I will go to that cobra and put my finger in his mouth, that he may bite me, and so I shall die." So she ordered the palkee-bearers to wait, and said she would be back in a while, and got out, and ran to the ants' nest, and put her finger in the cobra's mouth. Now a large thorn had run, a short time before, into the cobra's throat, so he could not close his mouth, and the Ranee, by putting her finger into his mouth, pushed out this thorn; then the cobra, feeling much better, turned to her, and said, "My dear daughter, you have done me a great kindness; what return can I make you?" The Ranee told him all her story, and begged him to bite her, that she might die. But the cobra said, "It was certainly very wrong to tell the Rajah what was not true; nevertheless, you have been very kind to me, and I will help you in your difficulty. Send your husband here. I will provide you with a father and mother of whom you need not be ashamed." So the Ranee joyfully returned to the palace, and invited her husband to come and see her parents.

When they reached the spot near where the cobra had been, what a wonderful sight awaited them! There, in the place which had before been thick jungle, stood a splendid palace, twenty-four miles long and twenty-four miles broad, with gardens and trees and fountains all round; and the light shining

from it was to be seen a hundred miles off. The walls were made of gold and precious stones, and the carpets were cloth of gold. Hundreds of servants, in rich dresses, stood waiting in the long, lofty rooms; and in the last room of all, upon golden thrones, sat a magnificent old Rajah and Raneë, who introduced themselves to the young Rajah as his father-and mother-in-law. The Rajah and Raneë stayed at the palace six months, and were entertained the whole of that time with feasting and music; and they left for their own home loaded with presents. Before they set out, however, the Raneë went to her friend, the cobra, and said, "You have conjured up all these beautiful things to get me out of my difficulties, but my husband, the Rajah, has enjoyed his visit so much that he will certainly want to come here again. Then, if he returns and finds nothing at all, he will be very angry with me." The friendly cobra answered, "Do not fear. When you have gone twenty-four miles on your journey, look back, and see what you will see." So they started; and on looking back at the end of twenty-four miles, saw the whole of the splendid palace in flames, the fire reaching up toward the heavens. The Rajah returned to see if he could help anybody to escape, and to invite all who were still alive to his court; but he found that all were burnt—not a stone nor a living creature remained!



ON LOOKING BACK THEY SAW THE WHOLE OF THE SPLENDID PALACE IN FLAMES

Then he grieved much over the sad fate of his parents-in-law.

When the party returned home the Rajah's brother said to him, "Where did you get these magnificent presents?" He replied, "They are the gifts from my father-and mother-in-law!" At this news the Rajah's brother went home to his wife very much discontented, and asked her why she had never told him of her parents, and taken him to see them, so that he also might have received rich gifts. His wife then went to her sister and asked her how she had managed to get all these things. At first the Ranee said, "Go away you wicked woman. I will not speak to you. You broke the heart of the dog who was so good to us, so that she died."

But afterward the Ranee told her sister all about it.

The sister then said, "I shall go to see the cobra, and get presents, too." The Ranee answered—"You can go if you like."

So the sister ordered her palanquin, and told her husband she was going to see her parents, and prepare them for a visit from him. When she reached the ants' nest she saw the cobra there, and she went and put her finger in his mouth, and the cobra bit her and she died.

III

CHUNDUN RAJAH

ONCE upon a time, a Rajah and Ranee died, leaving seven sons and one daughter. All these seven sons were married, and the wives of the six eldest used to be very unkind to their poor little sister-in-law; but the wife of the seventh brother loved her dearly, and always took her part against the others. She would say, "Poor little thing! her life is sad. Her mother wished so much to have a daughter, and then when the girl was born the mother died, and never even saw her poor child, nor was she able to ask any one to take care of her." At which the wives of the six elder brothers would answer, "You only take such notice of the girl in order to vex us." Then, while their husbands were away, they made up wicked stories against their sister-in-law, and told the stories to their husbands on their return home; the husbands believed their wives rather than their sister and were very angry with her and ordered her to be turned out of the house. But the wife of the seventh brother did not believe what the six others said, and was very kind to the little Princess, and before she was driven out sent her secretly as much food as she could spare from her own dinner. But, the six wives of the elder broth-

ers had no pity and cried out, "Go away, wicked girl, go away, and never let us see your face again until you marry Chundun Rajah! When you invite us to the wedding, and give us, the six eldest, six common stools to sit on, and the seventh sister (who always takes your part), a fine emerald chair, we will believe you innocent of all the evil deeds of which you are accused, but not until then!" This they said scornfully, and to make a cruel jest of her, for Chundun Rajah, of whom they spoke, and who had been the great Rajah of a neighboring country, had been dead many months.

So sad at heart, the Princess wandered forth into the jungle; and when she had gone through it, she came upon another, still denser than the first. The trees grew so thickly overhead that she could scarcely see the sky, and there was no village or house or living creature. The food her youngest sister-in-law had given her was nearly gone, and she did not know where to get any more. At last, however, right there in the jungle she came upon a fine house. It belonged to a Rakshas, though the Princess did not know this. Near by was a tank, and she sat down on the edge of it, for she was very tired, and ate some of the parched rice which was all that remained of her food. As she sat there, she thought to herself, "Perhaps this house belongs to a Rakshas, and per-

haps he will see me and kill me ; but since no one cares for me, and I have neither home nor friends, it does not matter what becomes of me." It happened, however, that the Rakshas was away from home, and there was no one in the house but the little cat and dog, who were his servants.

The dog's duty was to take care of the saffron with which the Rakshas colored his face on highdays and holidays, and the cat had charge of the antimony with which he blackened his eyelids. Before the Princess had been sitting there very long, the little cat spied her out, and running, to her, said, "Oh, sister, sister, I am so hungry, pray give me some of your dinner." The Princess answered, "I have very little rice left ; when it is all gone I shall starve. If I give you some, what have you to give me in exchange?" The cat said, "I have charge of the antimony with which my Rakshas blackens his eyelids—I will give you some of that," and running to the house she fetched a nice little potful of antimony, which she gave to the Princess in exchange for the rice. When the little dog saw this, he also ran down to the tank, and said, "Lady, lady, give me some rice, I pray you, for I, too, am very hungry." But she answered, "I have very little rice left, and when it is all gone I shall starve. If I give you some of my dinner, what will you give me in exchange?" The

dog said, "I have charge of my Rakshas' saffron, with which he colors his face. I will give you some of that." So he ran to the house and brought a quantity of saffron and gave it to the Princess, and she gave him also some of the rice. Then, tying the antimony and saffron up in her saree, she said good-bye to the dog and cat and went on her way.

Three or four days after this, she found she had nearly reached the other side of the jungle. The wood was not so thick, and in the distance she saw a large building that looked like a temple. The Princess determined to go and see what it was, and whether any one was there who would give her food, for she had eaten all her rice, and felt very hungry.

Now this temple, which was very magnificent, had been built by the father and mother of Chundun Rajah, that he might lie there in state. For though all believed him dead he still kept the color of life, and his beauty was unchanged; though his eyes were closed and he neither moved nor breathed. He lay upon a magnificent couch, with a golden canopy over it, and every day his mother and sister came to the temple to weep over him from sunrise to sunset, but in the evening they went back to the palace. Hundreds of people also came from far and near to visit the temple where their beloved young Rajah lay, and to wonder over the miracle of how he who

had died so many months before, should still lie there in all his beauty as though he only slept. Nearby there was a shrine, and a small hut where the Brahmin lived who had charge of the place.

The Princess knew nothing of all this, but just as she came to the temple, a violent storm came on. The rain beat upon her, and it grew so dark she could hardly see where she was going, so she ran into the temple as fast as she could. An oil lamp was burning dimly in a niche in the wall, and by its light she saw, to her wonder, a handsome young prince lying there asleep, as she thought, with rich hangings all around and a heavy jewelled coverlet partly drawn over him. She did not feel at all afraid, but sat quietly down in a corner to wait until he should wake, for he looked so kind and good she was sure he would not harm her.

At twelve o'clock the Rajah stirred and opened his eyes and looked about him, and when he saw her sitting in the corner he was very much surprised. He arose and brought a light and came toward her, and said, "Who are you?" "I am a poor, lonely girl," she answered, "and I came in here for shelter, from the storm, and I am very cold and hungry." She then told him all her story—how her sisters-in-law had told wicked untruths about her, and had driven her out into the jungle, and how they had told her she

should never see their faces again until she had married Chundun Rajah who had died so many months before. She also told how the youngest sister-in-law had been kind to her, and had given her food without which she would most certainly have died in the jungle.

The Rajah listened to her, and as he listened he was sure she spoke the truth, for in spite of her rags she had the look and manner of a Rajah's daughter, and her beauty shone in the temple like a star in the darkness. Moreover, her eyelids were darkened with antimony, and her beautiful face painted with saffron like the face of a Princess. Then he felt a great pity for her, and said, "Have no fear, for I will take care of you," and dragging the rich coverlet from his bed, he threw it over her to keep her warm. Then he went to the Brahmin's house, which was close by, and brought some rice, which he gave her to eat. "I, myself," he said, "am Chundun Rajah of whom you have heard. I die every day, but every night I come to life for a little while."

She cried, "Do not your family know of this? and if so, why do they leave you here in the temple instead of taking you back to the palace?"

Chundun Rajah replied, "None knows of it except the Brahmin who has charge of the place, and I have forbidden him to speak of it to any one,

for it would grieve my family more to know I can only waken for a few hours every night, than to believe me really dead. So I am keeping it secret, and as no one ever comes here except by day, no one has ever discovered it ; nor shall I ever let any one know unless by chance I become as other men, and shall be able when my time comes, to take my place as ruler of the kingdom.”

He then called the Brahmin who had charge of the temple and the little shrine outside (and who daily placed an offering of food on it for the Rajah to eat when he came to life), and said to him, “Henceforth, place a double quantity of food on the shrine, and take care of this Princess. If I ever recover she shall be my Ranee.”

Having said these words, he again placed himself upon the couch, his eyes closed, and it was as though he were dead. But the Brahmin took the Princess to his hut and bade his wife see that she wanted for nothing. He also told her to treat the Princess with the greatest respect, for sometime, by good fortune, she might become their Ranee.

So the Princess rested in the Brahmin's house all day, and Chundun Rajah's mother and sisters came as usual to visit the temple, but they did not see the Princess, for she hid away from them. In the evening, when the sun was setting, they went back

to the palace, and at night, when Chundun Rajah came to life, he called the Brahmin and said to him, "Is the Princess still here?" "Yes," he answered, "for she is weary with her journey and, besides, she has no other place to go."

Then the Rajah said, "Since she has neither home nor friends, if she is willing, you shall marry me to her, and she shall wander no further in search of shelter." So the Brahmin fetched his shastra and called his family as witnesses, and married the Rajah to the little Princess, reading prayers over them and scattering rice and flowers upon their heads. And she became the Chundun Ranee and lived there very happily for some time. She wanted for nothing, and the Brahmin and his wife took as much care of her as if she had been their daughter. Every day she would wait outside the temple, but at sunset she always returned to it and watched for her husband to come to life. One night she said to him, "Husband, I am happier to be your wife, and hold your hand and talk to you for two or three hours every evening, than if I were married to some great living Rajah for a hundred years. But, oh! what joy it would be if you could come wholly to life again! Do you know what is the cause of your daily death? and why you return to life each night at twelve o'clock?"

“Yes,” he said, “It is all because of my Chundun Har, the sacred necklace that holds my soul. A Peri stole it. I was in the palace garden one day, when many of those winged ladies flew over my head, and one of them, when she saw me, loved me and asked me to marry her. But I said no, I would not; and at that she was angry, and tore the Chundun Har off my neck and flew away with it. That instant I fell down as if dead, and my father and mother caused me to be placed in this temple; every night the Peri comes here and takes my necklace off her neck, and when she takes it off I come to life again, and she asks me to come away with her and marry her, and she does not put on the necklace again for two or three hours, waiting to see if I will consent. During that time I live. But when she finds I will not, she puts on the necklace again and flies away, and as soon as she puts it on, all life goes out from me.”

“Cannot the Peri be caught?” asked the Chundun Ranee. Her husband answered, “No, I have often tried to seize my necklace, for if I could regain it I should come wholly to life again; but the Peri can at will render herself invisible and fly away with it, so that it is impossible for any mortal man to get it.” When the Chundun Ranee heard this, she was grieved to the heart, for she saw no chance of the Rajah’s ever becoming as other men; moreover, she



AT THAT SHE WAS ANGRY AND TORE THE NECKLACE OFF AND FLEW AWAY WITH IT

thought, "We are all at the mercy of this Peri, and any day she may fly quite away with the necklace, and not return. Then Chundun Rajah will be altogether lost to me for he will never wake again." So she was very sad and sorrowful.

After some time a little baby was born to the Chundun Ranees, but even still she was sad at heart, so that at last the Brahmin said to Chundun Rajah, "Your Ranees will surely die unless she can go someplace where much care will be taken of her. My wife does the best she can, but ours is only a poor hut after all. Your mother and sisters are kind and good. Let your Ranees go to them and ask their help, and when they see how young and beautiful she is, and how sad, they will surely take pity on her, and help her."

This advice seemed good to Chundun Rajah, and he determined to do as the Brahmin said. Now in the courtyard of the palace there was a great slab of white marble on which Chundun Rajah used to love to rest on hot summer days. And because he had loved it, after he died, the Rajah and Ranees who were his father and mother, had ordered that no one should ever sit there, or even so much as touch the slab.

This Chundun Rajah knew, and now he said to his wife, "I will have to send you away from me,

for if you stay here you will surely die, and then our child will die, also. Take him, therefore, and go to the great slab of marble in the palace courtyard, where I used to love to rest before this misfortune came upon me. For my sake it is now kept with the greatest care, and no one is allowed even to touch it. But have no fear, seat yourself there with the child in your arms. They will then come and order you to go away, but when they see the child, who is so much like me, and learn that you are ill, I am sure they will have pity on you and will care for you."

The Chundun Ranee did not want to leave her husband, and wept bitterly at these words, but still she did as he bade her, and taking their child in her arms she went to the palace courtyard, and seated herself upon the slab.

Chundun Rajah's sister was looking from the window at that time, and she cried to her mother, "Mother, a woman with a child has come into the courtyard, and is sitting on my brother's marble slab. I will go and tell her she must not stay there." So she ran down to the place; but when she saw Chundun Ranee and the boy she was amazed for Chundun Ranee was like a flower in her beauty, and the child was the image of Chundun Rajah. Hastening back to her mother, she said, "Mother, she who sits upon the slab is the most beautiful lady

I have ever seen, though she looks so sad and ill that my heart aches for her, and the baby is the image of my lost brother. It is most wonderful."

At this the old Ranee and the rest of the family went out, and when they saw the Chundun Ranee, they all took such a fancy to her and to the child that they brought her into the palace, and were very kind to her, and took great care of her; and in a little while she got well and strong again, and much less unhappy. But the boy was dear to them above all things because of his strange likeness to the dead Rajah. After a time they gave his mother a small house to live in, close to the palace, and there they often used to go and visit her. There also the Chundun Rajah would go each night when he came to life, to laugh and talk with his wife and play with his boy, although he still refused to tell his mother and father of his existence. One day it happened, however, that the little child told one of the Princesses (Chundun Rajah's sister) that every evening some one came to the house to play with him, and to laugh and talk with his mother, and then always after a time, this person went away again. Also the Princess (Chundun Rajah's sister) had sometimes heard the sound of voices in Chundun Ranee's house, and had seen lights flickering about there when Chundun Ranee was supposed to be fast

asleep. All this the Princess told to her mother, saying, "Let us go down to-morrow night and see what this means; perhaps the woman we befriended and thought so poor and helpless is nothing but a cheat, and is entertaining her friends every night at our expense."

So the next evening they went down softly, to the place, and looking in they saw, not the strangers they had expected, but their long-lost Chundun Rajah. Then they ran in, and caught hold of him, and wept for joy. And now, since he could not escape, he told them all how every night for an hour or so he came to life, but was dead all day. And they reproached him for not letting them know he lived, even though only for such a short time each night. He also told them how he had married the Chundun Ranee, and thanked them for all their loving care of her.

After this he used to come every night and sit and talk with them; but still each day, to their great sorrow, he died; nor could they think of any means for getting back his Chundun Har, which the Peri wore round her neck.

At last one evening, when they were all laughing and chatting together, seven Peris flew into the room unseen by them, and one of the seven was the very Peri who had stolen Chundun Rajah's necklace, and she held it in her hand.

All the young Peris were very fond of the Chundun Rajah's boy, and used often to come and play with him, for he was the image of his father's loveliness, and as fair as the morning; and he used to laugh and clap his little hands when he saw them coming; for though men and women cannot see Peris, little children can.

Chundun Rajah was tossing the child up in the air when the Peris flew into the room, and the little boy was laughing merrily. The winged ladies fluttered round the Rajah and the child, and she that had the necklace hovered over his head. Then the boy, seeing the glittering necklace which the Peri held, stretched out his little hand and caught hold of it, and as he seized it the string broke, and all the beads fell upon the floor. At this the seven Peris were frightened and flew away, and the Chundun Ranee, collecting the beads, strung them and hung them round the Rajah's neck; and there was great joy amongst those that loved him, because he had recovered the sacred necklace, and the spell which had held him was broken.

The glad news was soon known throughout the kingdom, and all the people were happy and proud to hear it, crying, "We lost our young Rajah for such a long, long time and now one little child has brought him back to life." And the old Rajah and Ranee (Chundun Rajah's father and mother)

determined that he should be married again to the Chundun Ranee with great pomp and splendor, and they sent letters into all the kingdoms of the world, saying, "Our son, the Chundun Rajah, has come to life again, and we pray you come to his wedding."

Among those who accepted the invitation were the Chundun Ranee's seven brothers and their seven wives; and when she knew they were coming, she prepared for her six sisters-in-law, who had been cruel to her, six common wooden stools; but for the seventh, she made ready an emerald throne and a footstool adorned with emeralds.

As soon as the Ranees arrived they were taken to their places and when the six eldest saw the seats prepared for them they were greatly vexed, and complained, saying, "How is this? Six of us are given only common wooden stools to sit upon, but the seventh has an emerald throne?" Then the Chundun Ranee stood up, and before the assembled guests told them her story, reminding her six elder sisters-in-law of their former taunts, and how they had forbidden her to see them again until the day of her marriage with the Chundun Rajah, and she explained how unjustly they had accused her to her brothers. When the Ranees heard this, they were struck dumb with fear and shame, and were unable to answer a word; and all their husbands, being much enraged,

commanded that they should be driven out from the palace into the jungle, and this was done. On the same day the six elder brothers were married to six beautiful ladies of the court amid great and unheard-of rejoicings, and from that day they all lived together in perfect peace and harmony until the end of their lives.

Chundun Rajah—King Sandlewood

shastra—sacred books

Chundun Har—sandlewood necklace

IV

THE BLIND MAN, THE DEAF MAN AND THE DONKEY

A BLIND Man and a Deaf man once entered into partnership. The Deaf Man was to see for the Blind Man, and the Blind Man was to hear for the Deaf Man.

One time both went to a nautch* together. The Deaf Man said, "The dancing is very good, but the music is not worth listening to," and the Blind Man said, "On the contrary, I think the music is very good, but the dancing is not worth looking at."

Soon after this they set out together to take a walk in the jungle, and there they found a Dhobee's donkey, which had strayed away from its owner, and on its back was a great big chattee (such as Dhobees boil clothes in).

The Deaf Man said to the Blind Man, "Brother, here are a donkey and a Dhobee's great big chattee, with nobody to own them. Let us take them with us; they may be useful to us some day." "Very well," said the Blind Man, "we will take them with us." So the Blind Man and Deaf Man went on

* An entertainment where there is music and dancing.

their way, taking the donkey and the great big chattee with them.

A little farther on they came to an ant's nest, and the Deaf Man said to the Blind Man, "Here are a number of very fine black ants, much larger than I ever saw before. Let us take some of them with us to show to our friends." "Very well," answered the Blind Man, "we will take them as a present to our friends." So the Deaf Man took a silver snuff-box out of his pocket, and put four or five of the finest black ants into it, which done, they continued their Journey.

But before they had gone very far a terrible storm came on. It thundered and lightened and rained and blew with such fury that it seemed as though the whole heavens and earth were at war. "Oh dear, oh dear!" cried the Deaf Man how dreadful this lightning is: Let us make haste and get to some place of shelter." "I don't see that it's dreadful at all," answered the Blind Man, "but the thunder is very terrible, we had certainly better seek some place of shelter."

Now, not far off there was a lofty building which looked exactly like a fine temple. The Deaf Man saw it, and he and the Blind Man resolved to spend the night there, and having reached the place, they went in and shut the door, taking the donkey and

the big chattee in with them. But this building, which they mistook for a temple, was, in truth, no temple at all, but the house of a very powerful Rakshas; and hardly had the Blind Man, the Deaf Man and the donkey got inside and fastened the door than the Rakshas, who had been out, returned home. To his surprise he found the door fastened and heard people moving about inside his house. "Ho! Ho!" he said to himself, "Some men have got in here, have they! I'll soon make mince-meat of them." So he began to roar in a voice louder than the thunder, "Let me into my house this minute, you wretches—let me in, I say," and he began to kick the door and batter it with his great fists. But though his voice was very powerful, his looks were even more terrifying, so that the Deaf Man, who was peeping at him through a chink in the wall, was so frightened that he did not know what to do. But the Blind Man was very brave (because he couldn't see), and went to the door, and called out, "Who are you? What do you mean by coming and battering at the door in this way, and at this time of night?"

"I'm a Rakshas," answered the Rakshas angrily, "and this is my house. Let me in this instant, or I'll break every bone in your body." All this while the Deaf Man, who was watching the Rakshas through the chink, was shivering and shaking in a terrible

fright, but the Blind Man was very brave (because he couldn't see), and he called out again very boldly and said, "Oh, you're a Rakshas, are you! Well if you're a Rakshas, I'm a Bakshas; and a Bakshas is as good as a Rakshas." "A Bakshas!" roared the Rakshas, "Bakshas! Bakshas! What foolishness is this? There's no such creature as a Bakshas." "Go away," cried the Blind Man, "and don't dare to make any more noise and disturbance, or I'll punish you with a vengeance, for know that I am a Bakshas, and the Bakshas is the Rakshas' father." "My father?" answered the Rakshas. "Heavens and earth! A Bakshas and my father! I never heard of such a remarkable thing. You, my father; and in there! I never knew my father was a Bakshas."

"Well, you know it now," replied the Blind Man, "Go away instantly, I command you, for I am your father Bakshas." "Very well," answered the Rakshas, who now began to feel very much puzzled and frightened, "but before I go away father Bakshas, be pleased to show me your face that I may know what you look like." (For he thought perhaps this is a trick they are playing on me.)

At first the Blind Man and the Deaf Man didn't know what to do, but at last they opened the door just a little crack, and poked the donkey's nose out. When the Rakshas saw it, he thought to himself,

“My father Bakshas certainly has a terrible ugly face.” But still he was not satisfied, and he said, “Oh father Bakshas, your face is indeed very big and fierce; but sometimes people have very big heads and very little bodies. Let me, I pray you, see your body as well as your head before I go away.” Then the Blind Man and the Deaf Man rolled the Dhobee’s great big chattee past the crack of the door, with a great thundering noise, and the Rakshas, who was watching attentively, was very much startled when he saw this big black thing rolling across the floor; and he thought. “In truth, my father Bakshas has a very big body, as well as a horrid face. He’s big enough to eat me up altogether. I’d better get away from here.” But he couldn’t help feeling a little doubtful even still, so he called out, “Oh Bakshas, father Bakshas! You have indeed a very terrible head and a very big body; but do, before I go away, let me hear you scream,” (for all Rakshas scream terribly). Then the cunning Deaf Man (who was getting less frightened) pulled the silver snuff-box out of his pocket, and took the black ants out of it, and put one black ant in the donkey’s right ear, and another ant in the donkey’s left ear, and another and another. The ants began to pinch the donkey’s ears and the donkey was so surprised and startled that he began to bellow as loud as he could, “Eh

augh! eh augh! eh augh! eh augh! augh! augh!" and at this terrible noise the Rakshas fled away in a great fright, crying, "Enough, enough, father Bakshas! The sound of your voice would frighten the fiercest Rakshas in the world." And no sooner had he gone than the Deaf Man took the ants out of the donkey's ears and he and the Blind Man lay down and slept in peace and comfort for the rest of the night.

Next morning the Deaf Man woke the Blind Man early, saying, "Awake, Brother, awake; we are indeed in luck! Here the whole floor is covered with gold and silver and precious stones." And so it was, for the Rakshas had gathered a vast amount of treasure, so that the whole house was full of it. "That is a good thing," said the Blind Man. "Show me where it is, and I will help you to collect it." So they collected as much of the treasure as they could, and tied it up in four great bundles. The Blind Man took one great bundle, and the Deaf Man took another, and putting the other two great bundles on the donkey, they set out for home. But the Rakshas whom they had frightened away the night before had not gone very far off, and was waiting to see what his father Bakshas might look like in the daylight. He saw the door of his house open, and watched with great attention to see what

would happen, and out walked—a Blind Man a Deaf Man and a donkey, and they were all three carrying great bundles of his treasures. The Blind Man carried one bundle, and the Deaf Man carried another bundle, and two bundles were on the donkey.

The Rakshas was filled with rage when he saw this, and immediately called six of his friends to help him, and off they set after the Blind Man and the Deaf Man and the donkey.

The Deaf Man saw them coming (seven great Rakshas, with hair a yard long, great long noses and ears as big as palm leaves) and was dreadfully frightened; but the Blind Man was very brave (because he couldn't see), and he said, "Brother, why do you keep catching hold of my arm and pinching it? And why are your teeth chattering in your head?" "Oh!" answered the Deaf Man, "there are seven great Rakshas, very terrible to look at, coming after us, and what can we do?" "Let us hide the treasure in the bushes," said the Blind Man, "and do you lead me to a tree; I will climb up first, and you shall climb up afterward, and so we shall be out of their way." The Deaf Man thought this advice good; so he pushed the donkey and the bundles of treasure into the bushes, and led the Blind Man to a high Soparee tree that grew close by; but he was a very cunning man, this Deaf Man, and instead of wait-

ing until the Blind Man had climbed up, and then following him, he himself climbed up first, and let the Blind Man clamber after, so that he was farther out of harm's way than his friend.

When the Rakshas arrived at the place, and saw them both perched out of reach in the Soparee tree, he said to his friends, "Let us get on each other's shoulders; we shall then be high enough to pull them down." So one Rakshas stooped down, and the second got on his shoulders, and the third on his, and the fourth on his, and the fifth on his, and the sixth on his, and seventh and last Rakshas (who had invited all the others) was just climbing up when the Deaf Man (who was looking over the Blind Man's shoulder) got so frightened that in his terror he caught hold of his friend's arm, crying, "They're coming, they're coming!" The Blind Man was sitting at his ease, not knowing how near the Rakshas were, and so, when the Deaf Man gave him this unexpected push, he lost his balance, and tumbled down onto the neck of the seventh Rakshas, who was just climbing up. The Blind Man had no idea where he was, but thought he had got onto the branch of some other tree, and stretching out his hands to find something to hold to, he caught hold of the Rakshas' two great ears, and pinched them very hard in his surprise and fright. The Rakshas couldn't

think what it was that had come tumbling down upon him; and the weight of the Blind Man upset him, so that he fell to the ground, knocking down all the rest of the Rakshas, so that they all lay in a heap together at the foot of the tree. The Blind Man, who still did not know where he was, kept calling to his friend, "Where am I? Where am I? Where am I?" The Deaf Man, who all the while was safe up in the tree, shouted, "Well done, brother; never fear! Never fear! You're all right if you only hold on tight." But all the same he had no idea of coming down, or moving from where he was. However, he kept on shouting at the top of his lungs, "Hold on tight! I'm coming! I'm coming!" And the more he called, the harder the Blind Man pinched the Rakshas' ears, which he mistook for some kind of palm branches. The six other Rakshas had now succeeded in kicking themselves free from their unpleasant position, and they thought they had had quite enough of helping their friend, and ran away as fast as they could. The seventh Rakshas, when he saw them running, thought the danger must be greater than he knew, and he was, moreover, very much afraid of the mysterious creature that had suddenly fallen on his neck, and was pinching his ears so hard; so he put up his hands and pushed the Blind Man off, and without even

staying to look he ran off after his comrades as fast as he could.

As soon as all the Rakshas had gone, the Deaf Man came down from the tree, and helped the Blind Man to his feet and embraced him, "Brother," he said, "you did well. I could not have done better myself. You have frightened away all our enemies; but you see I came to help you as fast as I could." He then dragged the donkey and the bundles of treasure out of the bushes, gave the Blind Man one bundle to carry, took the second himself, and put the other two on the donkey, as before. This done, the whole party set off to return home. But when they were nearly out of the jungle, the Deaf Man said to the Blind Man, "We are now close to the village, but if we take all this treasure home with us, we shall run great risk of being robbed. I think our best plan would be to divide it equally; then you shall take care of your half, and I will take care of mine, and we can each of us hide his share here in the jungle in some safe spot." "Very well," said the Blind Man, "do you divide what we have into two equal shares, keeping one half yourself, and giving me the other."

But the cunning Deaf Man, who was a great rascal, had no idea of giving up half of the treasure to the Blind Man, so he first took his own bundle

of treasure in the bushes. He then took the two bundles off the donkey and hid them, too; he then took a great deal of the treasure from the Blind Man's bundle, and this he also hid. Last of all he took the small portion that remained, and divided it into two equal parts; one of these he placed in front of the Blind Man, and one in front of himself, then he said, "There, brother, is your share, do what you please with it." The Blind Man put out his hand, but when he found what a little heap of the treasure had been given to him, he became very angry, and cried out, "This is not fair—you are deceiving me; you have kept almost all the treasure for yourself, and have given me only a very little." The Deaf Man could not hear a word, but by watching the Blind Man carefully he could make out what he was saying. "Oh, oh!" he cried "how can you think so! But if you do not trust me, feel my share, and you will find it is no larger than yours." The Blind Man put out his hand, and sure enough the heap of treasure in front of the Deaf Man was no larger than his own. "Come, come!" he cried, "You think you can cheat me because I am blind, but I am not to be deceived so easily. I carried a great bundle of treasure, you carried a great bundle of treasure, and there were two great bundles on the donkey. Do you mean to pretend

that all that treasure made only these two little heaps? No, no! I know better than that." "Nonsense," answered the Deaf Man. "Nonsense, or no nonsense," cried the Blind Man, "you are trying to cheat me, and I won't be cheated!" "I'm not!" cried the Deaf Man. "You are," cried the Blind Man; and so they bickered and scolded, and contradicted each other until the Blind Man reached out and gave the Deaf Man a tremendous box on the ear. The blow was so violent that it made the Deaf Man hear, but before the Deaf Man knew this he gave the Blind Man such a slap in the face that it opened his eyes. So now the Deaf Man could hear, and the Blind Man could see, and they were so overjoyed and grateful to each other they became better friends than ever. The Deaf Man confessed that he had hidden the most of the treasure, and made haste to drag it out from the bushes, and they divided everything equally, and it was enough to make them rich men for all their lives; then they went home to enjoy themselves, and were friends forever after.

V

THE WANDERINGS OF VICRAM MAHARAJAH

THERE was once upon a time a Rajah named Vicram Maharajah,* who had a Wuzeer named Butti.† Both the Rajah and his minister were left orphans when very young, and after their parents' death they lived together : they were educated together, and they loved each other tenderly—like brothers.

Both were good and kind—no poor man coming to the Rajah was ever known to be sent away disappointed, for it was his delight to give food and clothes to those in need. He might, indeed, have given too freely, had it not been for the Wuzeer, to whom he turned for advice, and who always gave it wisely and reasonably. So under their united reign the kingdom prospered greatly, and the people were happy.

Now in a country some distance from Rajah Vicram's there lived a little Queen, called Anar Ranee (the Pomegranate Queen). Her father and mother reigned over the Pomegranate country, and for her

* The great King Vicram. † Light.

they had made a beautiful garden. In the middle of the garden was a lovely pomegranate tree, bearing three large pomegranates. They opened in the centre and in each was a little bed. In one of them Anar Ranee used to sleep, and in the pomegranates on either side slept two of her maids.

Every morning early the pomegranate tree would gently bend its branches to the ground, and the fruit would open, and Anar Ranee and her attendants creep out to play under the shadow of the cool tree until the evening; and each evening the tree again bent down to enable them to get into their tiny, snug bed-rooms.

Many princes wished to marry Anar Ranee, for she was said to be the fairest lady upon earth: her hair was black as a raven's wing, her eyes like the eyes of a gazelle, her teeth two rows of exquisite pearls, and her cheeks the color of the rosy pomegranate. But her father and mother had caused her garden to be hedged around with seven hedges made of bayonets, so that none could go in or out; and they had sent out a proclamation that none should marry her but he who could enter the garden and gather the three pomegranates, in which she and her two maids slept. To do this, kings, princes and nobles without number had tried but tried in vain.

Some never got past the first sharp hedge of

bayonets ; others, more fortunate, surmounted the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, or even the sixth ; but there perished miserably, being unable to climb the seventh. None had ever succeeded in entering the garden.

Before Vicram Maharajah's father and mother died, they built, some distance away from their palace, a very beautiful temple. It was of marble, and in the centre stood an idol made of pure gold. But in the course of time the jungle grew up round it, and thick straggling plants of prickly pear had covered it, so that at last it was difficult even to find where it was.

Then, one day, the Wuzeer Butti said to Vicram Maharajah, "The temple your father and mother built at so much pains and cost is almost lost in the jungle, and will probably ere long be in ruins. It would be a pious work to seek it out and restore it." Vicram Maharajah agreed, and immediately sent for many workmen, and caused the jungle to be cut down and the temple restored. All were much astonished to find what a beautiful place it was ! The floor was white marble, the walls exquisitely carved in bas reliefs and gorgeously colored, while all over the ceiling was painted Vicram Maharajah's father's name, and in the centre was a golden image of Gunputti for whose worship the temple had been built.

The Rajah Vicram was so pleased with the beauty of the place that on that account, as well as because of its sanctity, he and Butti used to go and sleep there every night.

One night Vicram had a wonderful dream. He dreamed his father appeared to him and said, "Arise, Vicram, go to the tower for lights which is in front of this temple."

(For there was in front of the temple a beautiful tower, or pyramid for lights, and all the way up it were projections on which to place candles on days dedicated to the idol; so that when the whole was lighted it looked like a gigantic candlestick, and to guard it there were around it seven hedges made of bayonets.) "Arise, Vicram, and go out to the tower for lights; below it is a vast amount of treasure, but you can only get it in one way without bringing down upon you the anger of Gunputti. You must first do in his honor an act of very great devotion, which if he graciously approve, and consent to save your life while you are doing it, you may with safety remove the treasure."

"And what is this act of devotion?" asked Vicram Maharajah.

"It is this," (he thought his father answered): "You must fasten a rope to the top of the tower, and at the other end of the rope hang a basket: into

this basket you must get head downward, then twist the rope by which it is hung three times, and as it is untwisting, cut it, when you will fall head downward to the earth.

“If you fall on either of the hedges of bayonets, you will be instantly killed; but Gunputti is merciful—do not fear that he will allow you to be killed. If you escape unhurt, you will know that he is content with your pious act, and you may without danger take the treasure.”

The vision faded; Vicram saw no more, and shortly afterward he awoke.

Then, turning to the Wuzeer, he said, “Butti, I had a strange dream. I dreamed my father counselled me to do an act of great devotion; nothing less than fastening a basket by a rope to the top of the tower for lights, and getting into it head downward, then cutting the rope and allowing myself to fall; having by this act pleased the divinity, he promised me a vast treasure, which I would find by digging under the tower! What do you think I had better do?”

“My advice,” answered the Wuzeer, “is, if you care to seek the treasure, to do entirely as your father commanded, trusting in the mercy of Gunputti.”

So the Rajah caused a basket to be fastened by a rope to the top of the tower, and got into it head downward; then he called out to Butti, “How can

I cut the rope ? ” “ Nothing is easier,” answered he ; “ take this sword in your hand. I will twist the rope three times, and as it untwists for the first time let the sword fall upon it.” Vicram Maharajah took the sword, and Butti twisted the rope, and as it began to untwist, the Rajah cut it, and the basket immediately fell. It would have certainly gone down among the bayonets, and he would have been instantly killed, had not Gunputti, seeing the danger of his devotee, rushed out of the temple at that moment in the form of an old woman, who, catching the basket in her arms before it touched the bayonets, brought it gently and safely to the ground ; having done which she instantly returned into the temple and again took the shape of the idol. None of the spectators knew that it was Gunputti himself who had done this, they only thought, “ What a clever old woman ! ”

Vicram Maharajah then caused people to dig below the tower, under which he found an immense amount of treasure. There were mountains of gold, there were diamonds, and rubies, and sapphires, and emeralds, and turquoises, and pearls ; but he took none of them, causing all to be sold and the money given to the poor, so little did he care for the riches for which some men sell their bodies and souls.

Another day, the Rajah, went into the temple, and dreamed again. Again his father appeared to him, and this time he said, "Vicram, come daily to this temple and Gunputti will teach you wisdom, and you shall get understanding. You may get learning in the world, but wisdom is the fruit of much learning and much experience, and much love to God and man; wherefore, come, acquire wisdom, for learning perishes, but wisdom never dies." When the Rajah awoke, he told his dream to the Wuzeer, and Butti recommended him to obey his father's counsel, which he accordingly did.

Daily he went to the temple and was instructed by Gunputti; and so he learnt much until at last Gunputti said to him, "I have given you as much wisdom as is in keeping with man's understanding; now, as a parting gift, ask of me what you will and it shall be yours—riches, or power, or beauty, or long life, or health, or happiness; choose what you will have?" The Rajah was very much puzzled, and he begged to be allowed a day to think over the matter, and decide what he would choose; to this Gunputti agreed.

Now it happened that near the palace there lived the son of a carpenter, who was very cunning, and when he heard that the Rajah went to the temple to learn wisdom, he also determined to go and see

if he could not learn it also ; and each day, when Gunputti gave Vicram Maharajah instruction, the carpenter's son would hide close behind the temple, and overhear all their conversation ; so that he also became very wise. No sooner, therefore, did he hear Gunputti's offer to Vicram than he determined to return again when the Rajah did, and find out in what way he was to procure the promised gift, whatever it was.

The Rajah consulted Butti as to what he should ask for, saying, "I have riches more than enough ; I have also sufficient power, and for the rest I had sooner take my chance with other men, which makes me much at a loss to know what to choose."

The Wuzeer answered, "Is there any supernatural power you at all desire to possess ? If so, ask for that." "Yes," replied the Rajah, "it has always been a great desire of mine to have power to leave my own body when I will, and send my soul and sense into some other body, either of man or animal. I would rather be able to do that than anything else." "Then," said the Wuzeer, "ask Gunputti to give you that power."

Next morning the Rajah, having bathed and prayed, went in great state to the temple to have his final interview with the idol. And the carpenter's son went too, in order to overhear it.

Then Gunputti said to the Rajah, "Vicram, what gift do you choose?" "Oh, divine power," answered the Rajah, "you have already given me a sufficiency of wealth and power, in making me Rajah; neither care I for more of beauty than I now possess; and of long life, health and happiness I had rather take my share with other men. But there is a power which I would rather have than all that you have offered."

"Name it, O good son of a good father," said Gunputti.

"Most wise," replied Vicram, "give me the power to leave my own body when I will, and send my soul, and sense, and thinking powers into any other body that I may choose, either of man, or bird, or beast—whether for a day, or a year, or for twelve years, or as long as I like; grant also, that however long I may be away from my own body it may not change, and when I please to return to it again I may find still as I left it."

"Vicram," answered Gunputti, "your prayer is heard," and he told Vicram Maharajah by what means he might send his soul into another body and also gave him something which, being placed within his own body when he left it, would prevent it from changing in any way until his return.

The carpenter's son, who had been all this time

listening outside the temple, heard and learnt the spell whereby Gunputti gave Vicram Maharajah power to enter into any other body ; but he could not see nor find out what was given to the Rajah to place within his own body when he left it, to preserve it ; so that he only learned half of the secret.

Vicram Maharajah returned home, and told the Wuzeer that he was possessed of the much-desired secret. "Then," said Butti, "the best use you can put it to is to fly to the Pomegranate country, and bring Anar Ranee here."

"How can that be done?" asked the Rajah. "Thus," replied Butti ; "transport yourself into the body of a parrot, in which shape you will be able to fly over the seven hedges of bayonets that surround her garden. Go to the tree in the centre of it, bite off the stalks of the pomegranates and bring them home in your beak."

"Very well," said the Rajah, and he picked up a parrot which lay dead on the ground, and placing within his own body the beauty-preserving charm, transported his soul into the parrot, and flew off.

On, on, on he went, over the hills and far away, until he came to the garden. Then he flew over the seven hedges of bayonets, and with his beak broke off the three pomegranates (in which were Anar Ranee and her two ladies), and holding them by the stalks

brought them safely home. He then immediately left the parrot's body and re-entered his own body.

When Butti saw how well he had accomplished the feat, he said, "Thank heaven! there's some good done already." All who saw Anar Ranee were astonished at her beauty, for she was fair as a lotus flower, and the color on her cheeks was like the deep rich color of a pomegranate, and all thought the Rajah very wise to have chosen such a wife.

They had a magnificent wedding, and were for a short time as happy as the day is long.

But within a little while Vicram Maharajah said to Butti, "I have again a great desire to see the world." "What!" said Butti, "So soon again to leave your home! So soon to care to go away from your young wife!"

"I love her and my people dearly," answered the Rajah; "but I cannot but feel that I have this wonderful power of taking any form I please, and longing to use it." "Where and how will you go?" asked the Wuzer. "To-morrow," answered Vicram Maharajah. "I shall again take the form of a parrot, and fly forth to see as much of the world as possible."

So it was settled that the Rajah should go. He left his kingdom in the Wuzer's sole charge, and also his wife, saying to her, "I do not know for how long I may be away; perhaps a day, perhaps a year,



"VERY WELL," SAID THE RAJAH AND PICKED UP A PARROT

perhaps more. But if, while I am gone, you should be in any difficulty, apply to the Wuzeer. He has ever been like an elder brother or a father to me; do you therefore also regard him as a father. I have charged him to take care of you as he would of his own child."

Having said these words, the Rajah caused a beautiful parrot to be shot. He then cut a small place in his arm and rubbed into it some of the magic preservative given him by Gunputti to keep his body from changing, and transporting his soul into the parrot's body, he flew away.

Now as soon as the carpenter's son learned that the Rajah was lying in the palace, as though dead, he was sure that Vicram Maharajah was making use of the secret learned from Gunputti, and had sent his soul into some other body. He determined himself to make use of this secret, which he also had learned; and to send his own soul into the body of the Rajah. This he did, and everybody supposed that Vicram Maharajah had only swooned, and now had recovered. But the Wuzeer was wiser than they, and immediately thought to himself, "Some one beside Vicram Maharajah must have learned Gunputti's spell, and is now making use of it, to play the part of Rajah for a while; but I'll soon discover if this be the case or no."

So he called Anar Ranee and said to her, "You are as certain as I am that your husband left us but now, in the form of a parrot; but scarcely had he gone before his deserted body arose, and he now appears walking about, and talking, and as much alive as ever; nevertheless, my opinion is, that the spirit in his body is not the spirit of the Rajah, but that some one else is possessed of the power given to him by Gunputti, and has taken advantage of it to take his place. But it would be better to put this to the proof. Do, therefore, as I tell you, that you may be assured of the truth of my words. Make to-day for your husband's dinner some very coarse and common currie, and give it to him. If he complains that it is not as good as usual, I am making a mistake; but if, on the contrary, he says nothing about it, you will know that my words are true, and that he is not Vicram Maharajah."

Anar Ranee did as the Wuzeer advised and afterward came to him and said, "Father," (for so she always called him), "I have been much astonished at what has happened. I made the currie very carelessly, and it was as coarse and common as possible; but the Rajah did not even complain. I feel sure it is as you say; but what can we do?"

"We will not," answered the Wuzeer, "cast him into prison, since he is in your husband's body; but

neither you, nor any of the Rajah's relations, must have any friendship with, or so much as speak to him; and if he speak to any of you, whoever it may be, immediately begin to quarrel with him, whereby he will find the life of a rajah not so agreeable as he thought, and may be induced the sooner to return to his proper form."

Anar Ranee told all her husband's relations and friends what Butti had advised, and the carpenter's son began to think the life of a rajah not at all as pleasant as he had fancied; he would, if he could, have gladly returned to his own body again; but, having no power to preserve it, his spirit had no sooner left it than it began to be destroyed so that the unhappy man had no other body to enter, and was obliged to remain where he was.

Meantime, the real Vicram Maharajah had flown, in the form of a parrot, very far, far away, until he reached a large banyan tree, where there were a thousand other pretty pollies. These he joined, making their number a thousand and one. Every day the parrots flew away to get food, and every night they returned to roost in the great banyan tree.

Now it chanced that a hunter had often gone through that part of the jungle, and noticed the banyan tree and the parrots, and he said to himself, "If I could only catch the thousand and one parrots

that nightly roost in that tree, I should not be so often hungry as I am now, for out of them I could make plenty of very nice currie." But he never could climb the tree, though he often tried ; for the trunks were tall and straight, and very slippery, so that he no sooner climbed up a little way than he slid down again ; however, he did not cease to look and long to catch the birds.

One day, a heavy shower of rain drove all the parrots back earlier than usual to their tree, and when they got there they found a thousand crows had lighted there on their homeward flight, to shelter themselves till the storm was over.

Then Vicram Maharajah Parrot said to the other parrots, "Do you not see these crows have all sorts of seeds and fruits in their beaks, which they are carrying home to their little ones? Let us quickly drive them away, lest some of these fall down under our tree ; the seeds, being sown there, will spring up strong plants and twine round the trunks, and enable our enemy the hunter to climb up with ease and kill us all."

But the other parrots answered, "That is a very far-fetched idea ! Do not let us hunt the poor birds away from shelter in this pouring rain, they will get so wet." So the crows were allowed to stay where they were. It turned out, however, just as Vicram

Maharajah had foretold ; for some of the fruits and seeds they were taking home fell under the tree, and the seeds took root and grew into strong creeping plants, which twined all round the straight trunks of the banyan tree, and made it very easy to climb up to the branches.

The next time the hunter came by he noticed this, and saying, "Ah, my fine friends, I've got you at last," he climbed the tree by the help of the vines, and set one thousand and one snares of fine thread among the branches ; having done which he went away.

That night when the parrots flew down on the branches as usual, they found themselves all caught fast by the feet.

"Crick ! crick ! crick !" cried they, "crick ! crick ! crick ! Oh dear ! what shall we do ? what can we do ? Oh, Vicram Maharajah, you were right and we were wrong. Oh dear ! oh dear ! crick ! crick ! crick !"

Then Vicram said, "Did I not tell you how it would be ? But do as I bid you, and we may yet be saved. As soon as the hunter comes to take us away, let every one hang his head down on one side, as if he were dead ; then, thinking us dead, he will not trouble himself to wring our necks, or stick the heads of those he wishes to keep alive through his belt, as he otherwise would. He will merely loosen

the snares and throw us on the ground. Let each one when there, stay perfectly still, till the whole thousand and one are set free, and the hunter begins to come down the tree to collect us. Then we will all fly up over his head and far out of sight."

The parrots agreed to do as Vicram Maharajah Parrot proposed, and when the hunter came next morning to take them away, every one had his eyes shut and his head hanging down on one side, as if he were dead. Then the hunter said, "All dead indeed! Then I shall have plenty of nice currie." And so saying, he cut the noose that held the first, and threw him down. The parrot fell like a stone to the ground, so did the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth, and so on—up to the thousandth parrot. Now the thousand and first chanced to be none other than Vicram; all were released but he. But, just as the hunter was going to cut the noose round his feet, he let his knife fall, and had to go down and pick it up again. When the thousand parrots who were on the ground, heard him coming down, they thought, "The thousand and one are all free, and here comes the hunter; it is time for us to be off." And with one accord they all flew up into the air and far out of sight, leaving poor Vicram Maharajah still a prisoner.

The hunter, seeing what had happened, was very angry, and seizing Vicram, said to him, "You wretched bird! it's you that has worked all this mischief. I know it must be, for you are a stranger here, and different from the other parrots. I'll kill you, at all events—that I will." But to his surprise, the parrot answered him, "Do not kill me. What good will that do you? Rather sell me in the next town. I am very handsome. You will get a thousand gold mohurs (about \$7,500) for me."

"A thousand gold mohurs!" answered the hunter, much astonished. "You silly bird, who'd be so foolish as to give a thousand gold mohurs for a parrot?" "Never mind," said Vicram, "only take me and try."

So the hunter took him into the town, crying "Who'll buy? who'll buy? Come buy this pretty polly that can talk so nicely. See how handsome he is. Who'll buy? who'll buy?"

Then several people asked how much he would take for the parrot; but when he said a thousand gold mohurs, they all laughed and went away, saying "None, but a fool, would give so much for a bird."

At last the hunter became angry, and he said to Vicram, "I told you how it would be. I shall never be able to sell you." But Vicram answered, "Oh

yes, you will. See, here comes a merchant down this way; I dare say he will buy me." So the hunter went to the merchant and said to him, "Pray, sir, buy my pretty parrot." "How much do you want for him?" asked the merchant—"two rupees?" (about \$1). "No, sir," answered the hunter; "I cannot part with him for less than a thousand gold mohurs!" "A thousand gold mohurs!" cried the merchant, "a thousand gold mohurs! I never heard of such a thing in my life! A thousand gold mohurs for one little wee polly! Why, with that sum you might buy a house, or gardens, or horses, or ten thousand yards of the best cloth. Who's going to give you such a sum for a parrot? Not I, indeed. I'll give you two rupees and no more." But Vicram called out, "Merchant, merchant, do not fear to buy me. I am Vicram Maharajah Parrot. Pay what the hunter asks, and I will repay it to you—only buy me and I will keep your shop."

"What nonsense you talk, Polly?" answered the merchant. But he took a fancy to the bird, and paid the hunter a thousand gold mohurs. Then taking Vicram Maharajah home, he hung him up in a cage in his shop.

Then the Parrot took on him the duties of shopman, and talked so much and so wisely that every one in the town soon heard of the merchant's won-

derful bird. Nobody cared to go to any other shop—all came to this shop, to hear the Parrot talk ; and he sold them what they wanted, and they did not care how much he charged for what he sold, but gave him whatever he asked ; insomuch, that in one week the merchant had made a thousand gold mohurs over and above his usual weekly profits. Vicram Maharajah Parrot lived for a long time with the merchant, made much of by everybody, and was very happy.

Now it happened that in the same town there lived a very beautiful Nautch girl (dancing girl), named Champa Ranee (The Champa Queen. “The Champa” *michelia champaca*—is a beautiful, sweet-scented yellow flower.) This girl danced so beautifully that the people of the town used always to send for her to dance on the occasion of any great festival.

There also lived in the town a poor wood-cutter, who earned his living by going deep into the jungle to cut wood, and bringing it every day to the bazaar to sell.

One morning he went out early as usual to cut wood, and being tired, he fell asleep under a tree and began to dream ; he dreamed that he was a very rich man, and that he married the beautiful Nautch girl, and that he took her home to his house, and gave her, as a wedding present, a thousand gold mohurs !

When he went into the bazaar that evening to sell the wood, he began telling his dream to his friends, saying, "While I was in the jungle I had such an absurd dream; I dreamed that I was a rich man, and that I married the Champa Ranee, and gave her for a wedding present a thousand gold mohurs!" "What a funny dream!" they cried, and thought no more of it.

But it happened that the house under which he was standing whilst talking to his friends was Champa Ranee's house, and Champa Ranee herself was near the window, and heard what he said. Then she thought to herself, "For all that man looks so poor, he must have a thousand gold mohurs hidden away somewhere, or he would not have dreamed of giving them to his wife; I'll go to law about it, and see if I can't get the money."

So she sent out her servants and ordered them to catch the poor wood-cutter; and when they caught him, she began crying out, "Oh husband! husband! here have I been waiting ever so long, wondering what had become of you; where have you been all this time?" He answered, "I'm sure I don't know what you mean. You're a great lady and I'm a poor wood-cutter; you must have mistaken me for somebody else."

But she answered, "Oh no! don't you remember

we were married on such and such a day? Have you forgotten what a grand wedding it was, and you took me home to your palace, and promised to give me as a wedding present a thousand gold mohurs? But you quite forgot to give me the money, and you went away, and I returned to my father's house till I could learn tidings of you; how can you be so cruel?"

The poor wood-cutter thought he must be dreaming, but all the Champa Ranee's friends and relations declared that what she said was true. Then after much quarreling, they said they would go to law about it; but the judge could not settle the matter, and referred it to the Rajah himself. The Rajah was no less puzzled than the judge. The wood-cutter protested that he was only a poor wood-cutter; but Champa Ranee and her friends asserted that he was, on the contrary, a rich man, and her husband, and had had much money, which he must have hidden. She offered, however, to give up all claim to that, if he would only give her a thousand gold mohurs, which he had promised. The wood-cutter replied that he would gladly give the gold mohurs if he had them; but that (as he brought witnesses to prove) he was really and truly what he said he was—a poor wood-cutter, who earned two annas (six cents) a day cutting wood, and had neither palace nor riches nor

wife in the world! The whole city was interested in this curious case, and all wondered how it would end; some being sure one side was right, and some equally certain of the other.

The Rajah could make nothing of the matter, and at last he said, "I hear there is a merchant in this town who has a very wise parrot, wiser than most men are; let him be sent for to decide this business, for it is beyond me."

So Vicram Maharajah Parrot was sent for, and placed in the court of justice, to hear and judge the case.

First he said to the wood-cutter, "Tell me your side of the story." And the wood-cutter answered, "Polly, Sahib, what I tell is true. I am a poor man. I live in the jungle, and earn my living by cutting wood and selling it in the bazaar. I never get more than two annas a day. One day I fell asleep and dreamed a silly dream—how I had become rich and married the Champa Ranee, and gave her as a wedding present a thousand gold mohurs; but it is no more true that I owed her a thousand gold mohurs, or have them to pay, than that I married her."

"That is enough," said Vicram Maharajah. "Now, dancing girl, tell us your story." And Champa Ranee gave her side of the matter. Then the Parrot

said to her, "Tell me now where was the house of this husband of yours, to which he took you?" "Oh!" she answered; "very far away, I don't know how far, in the jungles." "How long ago was it?" asked he. "At such and such a time," she replied. Then he called a number of honest and trustworthy witnesses, who proved that Champa Ranee had never left the city at the time she said. After hearing these, the Parrot said to her, "Is it possible that you would leave your rich and costly home to go a long journey into the jungle with this ragged wood-cutter? It has now been proved by these people that you did not do it; you had better give up all claim to the thousand gold mohurs."

But this the Nautch girl would not do. The Parrot then called for a money-lender, and begged of him the loan of a thousand gold mohurs, which he placed in a great bottle, putting the stopper in, and sealing it securely down; he then gave it to the Nautch girl, and said, "Get this money if you can, without breaking the seal or breaking the bottle." She answered, "It cannot be done." "No more," replied Vicram Maharajah, "can what you desire be done. You cannot force a poor man, who has no money in the world, to pay you a thousand gold mohurs. Let the prisoner go free! Begone, Champa Ranee. Dancing girl! you are a liar and a thief; go

rob the rich if you will, but meddle no more with the poor."

All applauded Vicram Maharajah Parrot's decision, and said, "Was ever such a wonderful bird!" But Champa Ranee was extremely angry. "Very well, you nasty polly; nasty stupid polly," she cried, "be assured before long I will get you in my power, and when I do, I will bite off your head!"

"Try your worst," answered Vicram; "but in return, I tell you this—I will live to make you a beggar. Your house shall, by your own order, be laid even with the ground, and you shall kill yourself for grief and rage."

"Agreed," said Champa Ranee; "we will soon see whose words come true, mine or yours"; and so saying, she returned home.

The merchant took Vicram Maharajah back to his shop, and a week passed without adventure; two weeks passed, but still nothing particular happened. But at the end of this time the merchant's eldest son was married and in honor of the occasion, the merchant ordered that a clever dancing-girl should be sent for, to dance before the guests. Champa Ranee came, and danced so beautifully that every one was delighted; and the merchant was much pleased, and said to her, "You have done your work very well, and in payment you may choose



"WE WILL SOON SEE WHOSE WORDS COME TRUE," SAID CHAMPA RANEE TO THE PARROT

whatever you like out of my shop or house ; it shall be yours—whether it is jewels or rich cloth, or indeed, anything I own.”

She replied, “I desire neither jewels nor rich stuffs, for I have more than enough of these, but you shall give me your pretty little parrot ; I like it much, and that is the only payment I will take.”

The merchant felt very much vexed, for he had never thought the Nautch girl would ask for the parrot which he was so fond of, and which had been so profitable to him ; he felt he would rather have parted with anything he possessed than that ; nevertheless, having promised, he was bound to keep his word, so, with many tears, he went to fetch his favorite. But Vicram cried, “Don’t be vexed ! give me to the girl ; I can take good care of myself.”

Champa Ranee took Vicram Maharajah Parrot home with her ; and no sooner did she get there than she sent for one of her maids, and said, “Quick, take this parrot and boil him for my supper ; but first cut off his head and bring it to me on a plate, grilled ; for I will eat it before tasting any other dish.”

“What foolish idea is this of our mistress,” said the maid to another, as she took the parrot into the kitchen ; “to think of eating a grilled parrot’s head !” “Never mind,” said the other ; “you’d better prepare

it as she bids you, or she'll be very cross." Then the maid who had received the order began plucking the long feathers out of Vicram Maharajah's wings, he all the time hanging down his head, so that she thought he was dead. But presently, before going to fetch some water in which to boil him, she laid him down close to the place where they washed the dishes. Now, the kitchen was on the ground floor, and there was a hole right through the wall, into which the water used in washing the dishes ran, and through which all the scraps, bones, peelings and parings were washed away after the daily cooking; and in this hole Vicram Maharajah hid himself, as soon as the girl had turned away.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" she cried when she returned. "What can I do? what will my mistress say? I only turned my back for one moment, and the parrot's gone." "Very likely some cat has taken it away," answered the other maid. "It could not have been alive, and flown or run away, or I should have seen it go; but never fear, a chicken will do very well for her instead."

Then they took a chicken and boiled it, and grilled the head and took it to their mistress; and she ate it, little bit by little bit, saying as she did so—

"Ah, pretty polly! so here's the end of you! This is the head that thought so cunningly and this

is the tongue that spoke against me! Aha! who is right now, I wonder?"

Vicram, in the hole close by, heard and felt very much frightened, for he thought, "Suppose she should catch me after all?" He could not fly away, for all his wing feathers had been pulled out; so he had to stay there in his hiding place for some time, living on the scraps that were swept into the hole in the washing of the plates, and always in danger of being drowned in the streams of water that were poured through it. At last, however, his new feathers had grown so that they would bear him, and he flew away to a little temple in the jungle some way off, where he perched behind the idol.

It happened the Champa Ranee often went to that temple, and he had not been there long before she came there to worship her idol.

She fell on her knees before the image, and began to pray. Her prayer was that the god would transport her body and soul to heaven (for she had a horror of dying), and she cried, "Only grant my prayer—only let this be so, and I will do anything you wish—anything—anything."

Vicram Maharajah was hidden behind the image and heard her, and said—

"Champa Ranee Nautch girl, your prayer is heard!" (She thought the idol himself was speaking

to her, and listened eagerly.) “ This is what you must do : sell all you possess, and give the money to the poor ; you must also give money to all your servants and dismiss them. Level also your house to the ground, that you may be wholly separated from earth. Then you will be fit for heaven. Having done all I command you, come again to this place one week from now, and you shall be carried to heaven both body and soul.”

Champa Ranee believed what she had heard, and forgetful of Vicram Maharajah Parrot’s threat, hastened to do as she was bidden. She sold her possessions, and gave all the money to the poor, dismissed all her servants and had her house levelled to the ground. Then on the day named by Vicram, she returned to the temple, and sat down on the edge of a well outside it. She explained to the people who had gathered there, that the idol himself had spoken to her, and that if they waited they would soon see her caught up to heaven.

All the people listened eagerly to her words, for they believed her, and the whole city had come out, with hundreds and hundreds of strangers and travelers, princes, merchants and nobles, from far and near, to see the miracle.

Then, as they waited, a fluttering of little wings was heard, and a parrot flew over Champa Ranee’s

head, calling out, "Nautch girl; Nautch girl! what have you done?" Champa Ranee recognized the voice as Vicram's and was terrified. "Will you indeed go body and soul to heaven," he cried. "Have you forgotten Polly's words?"

Champa Ranee rushed into the temple, and, falling on her knees before the idol, cried out, "Gracious Power, I have done all as you commanded; let your words come true; save me; take me to heaven."

But the parrot above her cried, "Good-bye, Champa Ranee, good-bye; you ate a chicken's head, not mine. Where is your house now? where your servants and all your possessions? Have my words come true, think you, or yours?"

Then the woman saw all, and in her rage and despair over her own folly, she fled away into the jungle, and never was seen again.

It was now two years since the Rajah Vicram left his kingdom; and about six months before, Butti, in despair of his returning, had set out to seek him. Up and down through many countries had he gone, searching for his master, but without success. As good fortune would have it, however, he chanced to be one of those strangers who had come to watch the miracle of the Nautch girl's being caught up to heaven, and no sooner did he see the Parrot which spoke to her than he knew it as Vicram. The Rajah

also saw him, and flew on his shoulder, upon which Butti caught him, put him in a cage and took him home.

But now there was a puzzling matter to settle. The Rajah's soul was in the parrot's body, and the carpenter's son's soul was in the Rajah's body. How was the soul of the carpenter's son to be driven out, so as to make room for the Rajah's soul? It could not return to its own body, for that had perished long ago, and it had no other place to go. The Wuzeer knew not how to manage the matter, so he determined to be patient and wait to see what would happen.

Now the pretended Rajah and Butti each had a fighting ram, and one day the Rajah said to the Wuzeer, "Let us set our rams to fight to-day, and try the strength of mine against yours." "Agreed," answered the Wuzeer; and they set them to fight. But there was much difference in the two rams; for when Butti's ram was but a lamb, and his horns were growing, Butti had tied him to a lime tree, and his horns had got very strong indeed by constantly rubbing against its tender stem and butting against it; but the carpenter's son had tied his ram, when it was a lamb, to a young teak tree, the trunk of which was so stout and strong that the little creature, butting against it, only damaged and loosened his own horns.

The pretended Rajah soon saw, to his vexation, that his favorite's horns being less strong than the others, he was beginning to lose courage, and would certainly be worsted in the fight; so, quick as thought, he left his own body and sent his soul into the ram's body, so as to give it more courage and resolution, and enable it to win.

No sooner did Vicram Maharajah, who was hanging up in a cage, see what had taken place, than he left the parrot's body and re-entered his own body. Then Butti's ram pushed the other down on its knees and the Wuzeer ran and fetched a sword, and cut off its head; thus putting an end, with the life of the ram, to the life of the carpenter's son.

Great was the joy of Anar Ranee and all the household at recovering the Rajah after his long absence; and Anar prayed him to fly away no more as a parrot, which he promised her he would not do, and from that time on they lived together in great happiness and peace, doing much good and beloved by all the people.

VI

THE BRAHMIN, THE TIGER, AND THE SEVEN JUDGES

ONCE upon a time a Brahmin, who was walking along the road, came upon an iron cage, in which a great Tiger had been shut up by some villagers, who had caught him in a jungle near by.

The Brahmin was about to pass, when the Tiger called to him, and said, "Brother Brahmin, brother Brahmin, have pity on me and let me out of this cage for a minute that I may drink a little water, for I am dying of thirst." The Brahmin answered, "No, that would be a foolish thing to do, for if I let you out of the cage you would eat me."

"Oh father of mercy," answered the Tiger, "in truth I would never do such an ungrateful thing. Only let me out to drink some water, and afterward I will at once return into the cage." Then the Brahmin took pity on the Tiger and opened the cage door; but no sooner had he done so than the Tiger, jumping out, said, "Now I will eat you, and then I will drink the water, for of a truth I was very thirsty." The Brahmin cried, "But what of your promise? Did you not say that if I would let you out you would

not harm me, but after drinking, would go back into the cage?" "It matters not what I said when I was locked in," replied the Tiger. "Now that I am free what I shall do is quickly make an end of you."

"At least give me some chance of life," the Brahmin said. "Let us ask the opinion of seven judges. If they declare it is fair and just that you should eat me I am willing to die; but if the most of them declare you should not harm me, then you shall let me go free." To this the Tiger agreed, and the two set out together, side by side.

Presently they came to a Banyan tree, and the Brahmin said to it, "Banyan tree, Banyan tree, hear and give judgment." "On what must I give judgment?" asked the Banyan tree. "This Tiger," said the Brahmin, "begged me to let him out of his cage to drink a little water, and he promised not to hurt me if I did so; but now, that I have let him out, he wishes to eat me. Is it just that he should do so or no?"

The Banyan tree answered, "Men often come to take shelter in the cool shade under my boughs from the scorching rays of the sun; but when they have rested, they cut and break my pretty branches and wantonly scatter my leaves. Let the Tiger eat the man, for men are an ungrateful race."

At these words the Tiger would have instantly

killed the Brahmin; but the Brahmin said, "Tiger, Tiger, you must not kill me yet, for you promised that we should first hear the judgment of seven." "Very well," said the Tiger, and they went on their way. After a little while they met a camel. "Sir Camel, Sir Camel," cried the Brahmin, "hear and give judgment." "On what shall I give judgment?" asked the camel. And the Brahmin related how the Tiger had begged him to open the cage door, and promised not to eat him if he did so; and how he had afterward determined to break his word. "And is that just?" asked the Brahmin. The Camel replied, "When I was young and strong, and could do much work, my master took care of me and gave me good food; but now that I am old, and have lost all my strength in his service, he overloads me and starves me, and beats me without mercy. Let the Tiger eat the man, for men are an unjust and cruel race."

Again the Tiger would then have killed the Brahmin without delay, but the latter said, "Stop, Tiger, for we must first hear the judgment of seven."

So they both went again on their way. At a little distance they found a Bullock lying by the roadside. The Brahmin said to him, "Brother Bullock, brother Bullock, hear and give judgment." "On what must I give judgment?" asked the Bullock. The Brahmin answered, "I found this Tiger in a cage, and he

prayed me to open the door and let him out to drink a little water, and promised not to kill me if I did so ; but when I had let him out he resolved to put me to death. Is it fair he should do so or no ? ” The Bullock said, “ When I was able to work my master fed me well and tended me carefully, but now I am old he has forgotten all I did for him, and has left me by the roadside to die. Let the Tiger eat the man, for men have no pity. ”

Three out of the seven had given judgment against the Brahmin, but still he did not lose all hope, and determined to ask the other four.

They next met an Eagle flying through the air, to whom the Brahmin cried, “ O Eagle, great Eagle, hear and give judgment. ” “ On what must I give judgment ? ” asked the Eagle. The Brahmin stated the case, but the Eagle answered, “ Whenever men see me they try to shoot me ; they climb the rocks and steal away my little ones. Let the Tiger eat the man, for men are the persecutors of the earth. ”

Then the Tiger began to roar, and said, “ The judgment of all is against you O Brahmin. ” But the Brahmin answered, “ Stay yet a little longer, for three others must be asked. ” After this they saw an Alligator, and the Brahmin related the matter to him, hoping for a more favorable answer. But the Alligator said, “ Whenever I put my nose out of the water

men torment me and try to kill me. Let the Tiger eat the man, for as long as men live we shall have no rest."

The Brahmin gave himself up as lost ; but again he prayed the Tiger to have patience and let him ask the opinion of the sixth judge. Now the sixth was a Jackal. The Brahmin again told his story, and said, "Now what is your judgment? Should not the Tiger let me go free?" "I care not which way it is decided," answered the Jackal. "Men have done little for me, but neither have they harmed me; but since five judges have decided against you I should think the Tiger might as well eat you."

The Brahmin was in despair, but there was still one other judge to be heard, so he and the Tiger went on still farther, and presently came to where a man was sitting beside the road. "It matters not how he decides, Brahmin," said the Tiger, "for already six have spoken against you, and I shall certainly eat you. Still if you choose we will ask this man's judgment also." So the Brahmin laid the whole case before the man. The man said, "It is impossible for me to decide in this matter as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong unless I see the exact position in which you were when the dispute began. Show me the place." So the Brahmin and the Tiger returned to the place where they had first met, and



"IT MATTERS NOT HOW HE DECIDES, BRAHMIN," SAID THE TIGER

the man went with them. When they came to the cage the man said, "Now Brahmin, show me exactly where you stood." "Here," said the Brahmin, standing by the iron tiger-cage. "Exactly there, was it?" asked the man. "Exactly here," replied the Brahmin. "Where was the Tiger, then?" asked the man. "In the cage," replied the Tiger. "How do you mean?" said the man; "how were you within the cage? which way were you looking?" "Why I stood so," said the Tiger, jumping into the cage, "and my head was on this side." "Very good," said the man, "but I cannot judge without understanding the whole matter exactly. Was the cage door open or shut?" "Shut and bolted," said the Brahmin. "Then shut and bolt it," said the man.

When the Brahmin had done this, the man said, "Oh, you wicked and ungrateful Tiger! when the good Brahmin opened your cage door, was eating him the only return you would make for his kindness? Now stay there for the rest of your days, for no one will ever let you out again. Proceed on your journey, friend Brahmin, and peace be with you," whereupon they parted, and the Brahmin returned to his home rejoicing.

VII

THE RAKSHAS' PALACE

THERE was once a Rajah whose wife had died, leaving him with two little daughters. Not very long afterward, he married again and his second wife did not care for her step-children, and was often unkind to them ; while the Rajah, their father, never troubled himself to look after them, but allowed his wife to treat them as she liked. This made the poor girls very miserable, and one day one of them said to the other, " Don't let us remain here any longer ; come away into the jungle, for nobody here cares whether we go or stay." So they went off into the jungle, and lived for many days on the jungle fruits. At last, after they had wandered on for a long while, they came to a fine palace which belonged to a Rakshas, but both the Rakshas and his wife were away. Then one of the Princesses said to the other, " This fine palace, in the midst of the jungle, can belong to no one but a Rakshas, but evidently he has gone out ; let us go in and see if we can find anything to eat." So they went into the Rakshas' house, and finding some rice, boiled and ate it. Then they swept the room and arranged all the furniture

in the house tidily. But hardly had they finished doing so when the Rakshas and his wife returned home. Then the two Princesses were so frightened they ran up to the top of the house and hid themselves. The Rakshas came indoors and looked around, and the husband said to his wife, "Someone has been setting the house in order, everything is so clean and tidy. Did you do this, wife, before we went out?" "No," said the wife, "and I don't know who has done it." "Someone has also been sweeping the courtyard," said the Rakshas. "Wife, did you sweep the courtyard?" "No," answered the wife, "I did not. I don't know who did it." Then the Rakshas walked round and round several times with his nose in the air, saying, "Someone is here now, for I can smell something that is not a Rakshas." "Stuff and nonsense," cried his wife, "you are always thinking someone is here. Do come out in the courtyard and let us draw some water, for I am ready to perish with thirst." So the Rakshas and his wife went to the well out in the courtyard, and began letting down jars into it and drawing up water and drinking it. Then the youngest Princess, who had gone to a window to peep out, saw them. She was a very wise girl, and when she saw the Rakshas and his wife by the well, she said to her sister, "Now I am going to do something that will be good for both

of us. Only keep very still and do not make a sound." Then she ran down quickly from the top of the house and crept up behind the Rakshas without being seen, and gave them each a push so that they fell into the well and were drowned. The Princess went back to her sister at the top of the house and said, "I have pushed the Rakshas into the well." "What, both?" cried her sister. "Yes, both," she replied. "Won't they come back?" asked the elder sister. "No, never," answered the other.

The two Princesses then took possession of the house and lived there happily for a long time. They found heaps and heaps of rich clothes and jewels and gold and silver hidden away in it;—things that the Rakshas had stolen from people, and all round the house were folds for the sheep, and sheds for the cattle which the Rakshas owned. Every morning the youngest Princess used to drive the flocks and herds out to the pasture, and every night she returned with them again, but the elder sister stayed at home and cooked the dinner and kept the house in order. Always the youngest Princess would say to her sister before she went out in the morning, "Be careful, sister! and if you see any stranger, man, woman, or child, come near the house, hide yourself so that nobody may know of our living here; and if any one should call out and ask for a drink of water, or any



SHE RAN DOWN AND GAVE THEM EACH A PUSH INTO THE WELL

poor beggar should pray for food, put on ragged clothes and cover your face with charcoal before you go to the door, and make yourself look as ugly as possible, lest someone seeing how fair you are should steal you away." "Very well," the other Princess would answer, "I will do as you say."

But a long time passed without anyone coming by that way. Then one day, after the youngest Princess had gone out, a young Prince, the son of a neighboring Rajah, who had been hunting with his attendants for many days in the jungles, came near the palace when searching for water (for he and his people were tired with hunting and had been seeking all through the jungle for a stream of water, but could find none). When the Prince saw the fine palace standing all by itself, he was very much astonished, and said, "It is a strange thing that any one should have built such a house as this in the depths of the forest. Let us go in; the owners will doubtless give us a drink of water." "No, no, do not go," cried his attendants. "This is most likely the house of a Rakshas." "We can but see," answered the Prince. "I should scarcely think anything very terrible lived here, for there is not a sound and not a living creature to be seen." So he began knocking at the door, which was bolted, and crying, "Will whoever owns this house give me and my people some water to drink, for the sake of

kind charity?" But nobody answered, for the Princess, who had heard him, was busy up in her room, blackening her face with charcoal and covering her rich dress with rags. Then the Prince became impatient and shook the door, crying angrily, "Let me in, whoever you are! If you don't, I'll force the door open." When she heard this, the poor little Princess became dreadfully frightened, and as she had already blackened her face, and had made herself look as ugly as possible, she ran down stairs with the pitcher of water, and unbolting the door, gave the Prince the pitcher to drink from; but she did not speak, for she was afraid.

Now the Prince was a very clever man, and as he raised the pitcher to his mouth to drink, he thought to himself, "This is a very strange-looking creature who has brought me the water. What can that black stuff be on her face and hands? If it were washed off, and she were not dressed in rags, and so untidy, I believe she would be quite pretty. And so thinking to himself, instead of drinking the water, he threw it in the Princess' face! The Princess started back with a little cry, whilst the water, trickling down her face, washed off the charcoal, and showed her delicate features and beautiful, fair complexion. The Prince caught hold of her hand, and said, "Now tell me true, who are you? Where do you come from? Who are your father and

mother? And why are you here alone by yourself in the jungle? Answer me, or I'll cut your head off." And he made as if to draw his sword. The Princess was so terrified, she could hardly speak, but as best she could, she told that she was the daughter of a Rajah and had run away into the jungle because of her cruel stepmother; she said she had found the house and had been living there ever since. Then, having finished her story, she began to cry. But the Prince said to her, "Pretty lady, forgive me for my roughness; do not fear; I will take you home with me, and you shall be my wife." But the more he talked to her, the more frightened she became; so frightened, indeed, that she could not understand anything he said.

Now when she had told the Prince her story, she had said nothing about her sister; she had not even told him that she had one, for she thought, "This man said he would kill me, and if he knew I had a sister, he might kill her, too"; for that was all she had understood of his talk. So the Prince, who was very kind hearted, and would never have thought of separating the two little sisters if he had known, said to his servants, "This lady is so frightened, she understands nothing I say to her. Place her in one of the palkees, and let us set off for home." And they did so. When the Princess found herself shut

up in the palkee, and being carried she knew not where, she thought how terrible it would be for her sister to return home and find her gone, and determined, if possible, to leave some sign to show her which way she had been taken. Round her neck were many strings of pearls. She untied them, and tearing her saree into little bits, tied one pearl in each piece of the saree, that it might be heavy enough to fall straight to the ground ; and so she went on, dropping one pearl and then another and another and another all along the way until at last she was brought to the palace where the Rajah and Ranee, the Prince's father and mother, lived. She threw the last remaining pearl down just as she reached the palace gate. The old Rajah and Ranee were delighted to see the beautiful Princess their son had brought home ; and when they heard her story they said, " Ah, poor thing ! what a sad story ! but now she has come to live with us, we will do all we can to make her happy." So she was married to the young Prince with great pomp and ceremony, and the old Rajah and Ranee gave her rich dresses and jewels, and were very kind to her. But the Princess remained sad and unhappy, for she was always thinking about her sister, and yet she had not the courage to beg the Prince or his father to send and bring her to the palace.

Meanwhile the youngest Princess, who had been

out with her flocks and herds when the Prince took her sister away, had returned home. When she came back she found the door wide open and no one standing there. She thought it very odd, for her sister always came every night to the door to meet her on her return. She went up-stairs; her sister was not there; the whole house was empty and deserted. There she must stay all alone, for the evening had closed in, and it was impossible to go outside and seek her with any hope of success. So all the night long she waited, crying, "Someone has been here, and they have stolen her away; they have stolen my darling away. O sister! sister!" Next morning, very early, going out to continue the search, she found one of the pearls belonging to her sister's necklace tied up in a small piece of saree; a little farther on lay another, and yet another; they lay all along the road the Prince had gone. Then the Princess understood that her sister had left this clue to guide her on her path, and she at once set off to find her. Very, very far she went—a six months' journey through the jungle, for she could not travel fast, the many days' walking tired her so much—and sometimes it took her two or three days to find the next piece of saree with the pearl. At last she came near a large town, to which it was evident her sister had been taken. Now this young Princess was very

beautiful indeed—as beautiful as she was wise—and when she got near the town she thought to herself, “If people see me, they may steal me away, as they did my sister, and then I shall never find her again. I will, therefore, disguise myself.” As she was thus thinking, she saw lying by the side of the road the skin and bones of an old, beggar woman, who had evidently shrivelled up and died of old age. The Princess took the skin and washed it, and made it neat and clean, and drew it on over her own lovely face and arms, just as one draws a glove on over one’s hand. Then she took a long stick, and began hobbling along toward the town. The people who met her thought, “What an ugly old woman,” and never dreamed that under that wrinkled skin was hidden a beautiful Princess. So on she went, picking up the pearls—one here, one there—until she found the last pearl just in front of the palace gate. Then she felt certain her sister must be somewhere near, but where she did not know. She longed to go into the palace and ask for her, but the guards would never have let such a wretched-looking old woman enter, and she did not dare to offer them any of the pearls she had with her, lest they should think she was a thief. So she determined to remain as close to the palace as possible, and wait for a chance to learn something further about her sister. Just opposite the palace was

a small house belonging to a farmer, and the Princess went up to it and stood by the door. The farmer's wife saw her and said, "Poor old woman, who are you? What do you want? Why are you here? Have you no friends?" "Alas, no!" answered the Princess. "I am a poor old woman, and have neither father nor mother, nor son nor daughter, nor sister nor brother, to take care of me; all are gone, and I can only beg my bread from door to door."

"Do not grieve, good mother," answered the farmer's wife, kindly. "You may sleep in the shelter of our porch, and I will give you some food." So the Princess stayed there for that night and for many more; and every day the good farmer's wife gave her food. But all this time she could learn nothing of her sister.

Now there was a large tank near the palace on which grew some fine lotus plants, covered with rich crimson lotuses—the royal flower—and the Rajah was very fond of them indeed, and prized them greatly. To this tank (because it was the nearest to the farmer's house) the Princess used to go every morning, very early, almost before it was light, at about three o'clock, and take off the old woman's skin and wash it, and hang it out to dry. She would also wash her face and hands, and bathe her feet in the cool water, and comb her beautiful hair. Then

she would gather a lotus flower (such as she had been accustomed to wear in her hair as a child) and put it on ; then for a few minutes she would feel like herself again ! Thus she would amuse herself. Afterward, as soon as the wind had dried the old woman's skin, she would put it on again, throw away the lotus flower, and hobble back to the farmer's door before the sun was up.

After a time, the Rajah discovered that some one was plucking his favorite lotus flowers, and people were set to watch, and discover, if possible, who it was. But as the watchers only came after it was light, and left as soon as it became dark, they saw nothing of the old woman who was the Princess. At last the excitement over the matter became so great that the Rajah's second son, (brother of the one who had found the Princess in the forest) determined that he would himself watch for the thief, hoping that he might be more fortunate than the others. Now this second son was a very brave and noble Prince, and clever as well. He said to himself, " As the watchers only watch the flowers by day, and never see anyone, it must be that the thief comes there by night, and then is when I will keep my watch." Now there were several fine trees growing near the tank, and into one of these the young Prince climbed toward evening (having made a sort of light-thatched roof across two

of the boughs to keep off the heavy dews). There he watched for hour after hour, but with no more success than the others. Below him, in the tank, the lotus plants lay shining in the moonlight without so much as a thieving wind coming by to break off one of the flowers. The Prince began to get very sleepy, and thought the thief, whoever he might be, did not intend to return. But, in the very early morning, before it was light, who should come down to the tank but an old woman he had often seen near the palace gate. "Aha!" thought the Prince, "this then is the thief; but what can this queer old woman want with lotus flowers?" Imagine his astonishment when the old woman sat down on the steps of the tank and took off the wrinkled skin she was wearing and showed herself as one of the most beautiful maidens the Prince had ever beheld! So fair, so fresh, so young, so gloriously beautiful she was that, appearing thus suddenly, she dazzled the Prince's eyes like a flash of golden lightning. "Ah," thought he, "Can this be a woman or a spirit? a peri or an angel in disguise?"

The Princess twisted up her glossy black hair, and, plucking a red lotus flower, placed it in it, and dabbled her feet in the water, and amused herself by putting round her neck a string of pearls that had been her sister's necklace. Then, as the sun was rising,

she threw away the lotus, and covering her face and arms again with the withered skin, went hastily away. When the Prince got home, the first thing he said to his parents was, "Father, mother! I should like to marry that old woman who stands all day at the farmer's gate, just opposite." "What!" cried they, "The boy is mad! Marry that skinny old thing! You cannot—you are a king's son. Are there not enough Queens and Princesses in the world, that you should wish to marry a wretched old beggar-woman?" But he answered, "Above all things, I should like to marry that old woman. You know that I have ever been a dutiful and obedient son. In this matter, I pray you, grant me my desire." Then, seeing he was really in earnest about the matter, and that nothing they could say would alter his mind, they listened to his urgent entreaties—not, however, without much grief and vexation—and sent out the guards, who brought the old woman (who was really the Princess in disguise) to the palace. There she was married to the Prince as privately and with as little ceremony as possible, for his father and mother were very much ashamed of the whole affair.

As soon as the wedding was over, the Prince said to his wife, "Gentle wife, tell me how much longer you intend to wear that old skin? You had better take it off; do be so kind." The Princess wondered

how he knew of her disguise, and decided it was only a guess of his ; and she thought, " If I take this ugly skin off, my husband will think me pretty, and shut me up in the palace and never let me go away, so that I shall not be able to find my sister again. No, I had better not take it off." So she answered, " I don't know what you mean. I am as all these years have made me ; nobody can change their skin." Then the Prince pretended to be very angry, and said, " Take off that hideous disguise this instant, or I'll kill you." But she only bowed her head, saying, " Kill me, then, but nobody can change her skin." And all this she mumbled as if she were a very old woman indeed, and had lost all her teeth and could not speak clearly. At this the Prince laughed very much to himself, and thought, " I'll wait and see how long this trick will last." But the Princess continued to keep on the old woman's skin ; only every morning, at about three o'clock, before it was light, she would get up and wash it and put it on again. Then sometime afterward, the Prince, having found this out, got up softly one morning, and followed her to the next room, where she had washed the skin and placed it on the floor to dry, and stealing it, he ran away with it and threw it on the fire. So the Princess, having no old woman's skin to put on, was obliged to appear in her own likeness. As she walked forth,

very sad at losing her disguise, her husband ran to meet her, smiling and saying, "How do you do, my dear? Where is your skin now? Can't you take it off, my dear?" Soon the whole palace had heard the joyful news of the beautiful young wife that the Prince had won; and all the people, when they saw her, cried, "Why she is exactly like the beautiful Princess, the Jungle lady, our young Rajah married." The old Rajah and Ranee were prouder than all of their daughter-in-law, and took her to introduce her to their eldest son's wife. Then no sooner did the Princess enter her sister-in-law's room than she saw that in her she had found her lost sister, and they ran into each other's arms. Great then was the joy of all, but the happiest of all these happy people were perhaps, the two Princesses, who had at last found each other again after so many adventures.

VIII

SODEWA BAI

ONCE upon a time there lived a Rajah and Ranee, who had one only daughter, and she was the most beautiful princess in the world. Her face was as fair and delicate as the clear moonlight, and they called her Sodewa Bai. At her birth her father and mother had sent for all the wise men in the kingdom to tell her fortune, and they predicted that she would grow up richer and more fortunate than any other lady; and so it was, for from her earliest youth she was good and lovely, and whenever she opened her lips to speak pearls and precious stones fell upon the ground, and as she walked along they would scatter on either side of her path, inso-much that her father soon became the richest Rajah in all that country, for his daughter could not go across the room without shaking down jewels worth a dowry. Moreover, Sodewa Bai was born with a golden necklace about her neck, concerning which her parents had also consulted wise men. They had said, "This is no common child; the necklace of gold about your daughter's neck contains her soul: let it therefore be guarded with the utmost care, for

if it were taken off and worn by another person she would die." So the Ranee, her mother, caused it to be firmly fastened round the child's neck, and as soon as she was old enough to understand, she was taught its value, and told on no account to allow it ever to be taken off.

At the time the Princess was fourteen years old, she was still not married, for her father and mother had promised that she should not be until it pleased herself; and although many great rajahs and nobles sought her hand, she had refused them all.

Now Sodewa Bai's father, on one of her birthdays, gave her a lovely pair of slippers made of gold and jewels. Each slipper was worth a hundred thousand gold mohurs. There were none like them in all the earth. Sodewa Bai prized those slippers very much, and always wore them when she went out walking, to protect her tender feet from the stones; but one day, as she was wandering with her ladies upon the side of the mountain on which the palace was built, playing and picking the wild flowers, her foot slipped and one of the golden slippers fell down, down, down the steep hillslope, over rocks and stones, into the jungle below. Sodewa Bai sent attendants to search for it, and the Rajah caused criers to go throughout the town and proclaim that whoever discovered the Princess' slipper should receive a great

reward ; but though it was hunted for far and near, high and low, it could not be found.

It chanced, however, that not very long after this a young Prince, the eldest son of a Rajah who lived in the plains, was out hunting, and in the jungle he picked up the very little golden slipper which Sodewa Bai had lost, and which had tumbled all the way from the mountain-side into the depths of the forest. He took it home with him, and showed it to his mother, saying, "What a fairy foot must have worn this tiny slipper !" "Ah, my boy," she said, "this must have belonged to a lovely Princess, in truth (if she is but as beautiful as her slipper), would that you could find such a one to be your wife !" Then they sent into all the towns of the kingdom to inquire for the owner of the lost slipper, but she could not be found. At last, when many months had gone by, it happened that news was brought by travelers to the Rajah's capital, of how, in a far distant land, very high among the mountains, there lived a beautiful Princess who had lost her slipper, and whose father had offered a great reward to whoever should restore it ; and from the description they gave all were sure it was the one that the Prince had found.

Then his mother said to him, "My son, it is certain that this slipper belongs to none other than the daughter of the great Mountain Rajah ; therefore take

it to his palace, and when he offers you the promised reward, say that you wish for neither silver nor gold, but ask him to give you his daughter in marriage. Thus you may gain her for your wife."

The Prince did as his mother advised; and when, after a long, long journey, he reached the court of Sodewa Bai's father, he presented the slipper to him, saying, "I have found your daughter's slipper, and for restoring it I claim a great reward." "What will you have?" said the Rajah, "Shall I pay you in horses? or in silver? or in gold?" "No," answered the Prince, "I will have none of these things. I am the son of a Rajah who lives in the plains, and I found this slipper in the jungle where I was hunting, and have traveled for many weary days to bring it to you; but the only payment I care for is the hand of your beautiful daughter; if it pleases you, let me become your son-in-law." The Rajah answered, "This is something that I cannot promise you. I have vowed that my daughter shall never be married against her will. This matter depends on her alone. If she is willing to be your wife I shall be glad, but she must decide for herself."

Now it happened that when the Prince had ridden up to the palace gate Sodewa Bai had been looking from her window, and no sooner had she seen him than she loved him. So now, as soon as her

father told her of the Prince's errand, she said, "I have already seen him, and I am quite willing to marry him."

So they were married with great rejoicing and splendor. Only the other Rajahs, who had hoped to win her hand were vexed, and said, one to another, "What can Sodewa Bai see in this young Prince that she should choose him instead of one of us? She is making a great mistake, and this is a very foolish marriage." But in spite of their complaints they all came to the wedding and were entertained at the palace, and the wedding festivities lasted many days.

Now after Sodewa Bai and her husband had lived there for some time in the palace of the Mountain Rajah, Sodewa Bai's husband said to him, "I have a great desire to see my own people again, and to return to my own country. Let me take my wife, I pray of you, and go."

"Very well," replied the old Rajah, "I am willing; but take good care of your wife. Guard her as the apple of your eye, and above all things never allow her golden necklace to be taken from her neck, for if this should be done, and anyone else should wear it, her life would at once go out from her, and she would be as one who is dead."

The Prince promised to be watchful, and then he and Sodewa Bai departed for his father's kingdom.

But first the Rajah of the Mountains gave them many elephants, horses, camels and attendants ; also jewels innumerable, much money, and many rich hangings, robes and carpets.

The old Rajah and Ranee of the Plains were delighted to welcome home their son and his bride. They wondered at the beauty of Sodewa Bai, and loved her for her gentleness and sweetness. Everywhere there were general rejoicings, and of all in the kingdom, only two people were dissatisfied and angry. These two were the Prudhan* and his daughter. The Prudhan had always been a great favorite of the old Rajah, and very important in the kingdom, and had hoped that his daughter would sometime be married to the Prince, and become a Ranee. The daughter also had expected it, but now that Rowjee (for such was the Prince's name) had brought home Sodewa Bai as his bride, he thought only of her, and desired no other Ranee. The daughter was a very clever girl, but her wicked heart was so full of envy and hatred toward Sodewa Bai that she could not altogether hide it. Because of this the old Rajah and Ranee never liked her to be with their pretty little daughter-in-law, and cautioned Sodewa Bai against her. But Sodewa Bai was so gentle and good that she could never believe harm of anyone, and she said,

* Prudhan—Prime Minister.

“I have no fear. I love her, and I think she loves me, for she is very kind to me.”

One day Rowjee Rajah was obliged to go on a journey to a far-off part of his father's kingdom. Being unable to take Sodewa Bai with him, he left her in his parents' charge and he begged them to watch over her carefully, and not to allow any harm to come to her. This they promised to do, and also they promised to go every morning to her apartments, and see that she was well.

A little while after her husband had gone the Prudhan's daughter came to her and said, “Now that Rajah Rowjee is away you must come often to see me, and I will come often to see you and talk to you, and we will amuse ourselves together as well as we can.” To this Sodewa Bai agreed, and to please her visitor she took out all her jewels and pretty things to show her. As they were looking over them, Prudhan's daughter said, “I notice you always wear that row of golden beads round your neck. Why is that? Have you any reason for always wearing the same ones?” “Oh, yes,” answered Sodewa Bai, thoughtlessly. “I was born with these beads round my neck, and the wise men told my father and mother that they contain my soul, and that if anyone else wore them I should die. Therefore I always keep them on my neck. I have never once taken them off.” When

the Prudhan's daughter heard this she was very much pleased, for she now saw a way by which to get rid of the young Ranee. All she had to do was to take away the necklace, and Sodewa Bai would die. She feared to try to do this herself, however, so she offered a large sum of money to a negress who lived in the palace, if she would go to the young Ranee's room at night and steal the beads. This the negress agreed to do, and that very night she stole quietly past the guards, who were asleep (for she had put a sleeping powder in their drink) and entered Sodewa Bai's chamber.

The young Ranee lay there asleep, and she looked so young and beautiful that anyone else would have pitied her; but the negress thought only of the money she was to receive, and she managed to slip the beads from Sodewa Bai's neck so gently that the young Ranee was not awakened. Then the negress put the beads about her own neck, and went away with them.

The next morning the old Rajah and Ranee came, as usual, to visit their daughter-in-law, and knocked at the door of her room. No one answered. They knocked again, and still again, and then, hearing no sound and receiving no reply, they went in, and found her lying there without breath or motion, just as though she were dead, except that there was still color in her lips and cheeks. The old Rajah and

Ranee tried to arouse her but could do nothing. They questioned the guards who kept watch outside her door, and asked if anyone had entered the room the night before, or if they had heard any noise. But the guards declared they had heard no sound, and were sure that no one had come near the place; they were afraid to say that they had all been asleep.

Then the Rajah and Ranee sent for all the most learned doctors in the kingdom, and everything that was possible was done for the young Ranee, but no one could bring back life into her.

Then the old Rajah and Ranee grieved and mourned bitterly and they laid Sodewa Bai under a golden canopy in a beautiful little temple beside a tank where pomegranate and mango trees grew. She lay there as if asleep, with her eyes closed, and the color never left her cheeks and lips, and her beauty did not fade or change. Every day the old Rajah and Ranee went there to visit her, and to weep over her.

When the young Rajah Rowjee came home at last from his journey and heard what had happened, he was so broken hearted that everyone feared that he would die. He spent all his days in the temple mourning over his wife and gazing upon her beauty, and calling upon her name. Only in the evening did he return to the palace.

Now the negress who had taken Sodewa Bai's necklace used to wear it all day long, but late each night, on going to bed, she would take it off, and put it by till next morning, and whenever she took it off Sodewa Bai's soul returned again into her body, and she woke and lived till day dawned, and the negress again put on the necklace. Then again the life went out of the young Ranee, and she lay as if dead. But as the temple was far from any houses, and as the old Rajah and Ranee, and Rowjee Rajah never came there after sunset, they never discovered that she came alive in the night-time.

The first time that Sodewa Bai came to life in the temple she felt very much frightened at finding herself alone there in the dark. But as nothing happened she soon lost her fear. She felt for her necklace, and finding it gone she guessed what had happened, and determined that when morning came she would find her way back to the palace and recover her beads. It would have been dangerous for her to go at night through the jungle that surrounded the temple, for she could hear the wild beasts howling there all night long. But morning never came for Sodewa Bai, for as soon as the negress awoke and put on the beads again, Sodewa Bai's soul went out from her, and she became unconscious.

However, each night, when the young Ranee

came to life, she would walk out to the little tank and drink some of the cool water, and eat of the fruit of the trees that grew beside it. No pearls or precious stones now fell from her lips, because she had no one to talk to, but each time she walked down to the tank she scattered jewels on either side of her path; and one day when Rowjee Rajah went to the tomb, he noticed all these jewels, and thinking it very strange, he determined to wait and see how they came there. But though he watched and waited long he could not discover anything about it, because it was only at night that Sodewa Bai came to life, and always by that time the young Rajah had gone away.

Now one night, some time after she had been laid in the temple, a little baby was born to Sodewa Bai, and it was a son. Then she rejoiced over it, and cared for it tenderly. But though she rejoiced she wept, too, because it seemed as though she would never be able to make her way back to the palace, and show the child to Rowjee Rajah.

All day the baby slept beside her, covered by the coverlid that she drew up over her, and only when she awoke to life did the child wake, too. So months passed by, and still Rowjee Rajah had not discovered whence came the jewels that he found every morning, scattered beside the path from the temple to the tank. Then he began to think to himself, "Every

day I watch beside the temple and no one comes there and yet every morning there are still more jewels beside the path. Now I will watch at night, and perhaps discover whence they come, and how."

So at night he went to the place, and when he got there he heard a faint cry from inside the tomb, but what it was he knew not; perhaps it might be a peri or an evil spirit. But even as he listened the door opened and Sodewa Bai came out and crossed the courtyard to the tank with a child in her arms, and as she walked showers of jewels fell on both sides of her path. Rowjee Rajah thought he must be in a dream; but when he saw the Ranee drink some water from the tank, and pluck the fruit from the trees, and then return toward the tomb, he sprang up and hurried after her. Sodewa Bai, hearing footsteps following her, was frightened, and running into the tomb, fastened the door. Then the Rajah knocked at it, saying, "Let me in; let me in." She answered, "Who are you? Are you a Rakshas or a spirit?" (For she thought, "Perhaps this is some cruel creature who will kill me and the child.") "No, no," cried the Rajah, "I am no Rakshas, but your husband. Let me in, Sodewa Bai, if you are indeed alive." When Sodewa Bai heard his voice she went and unbolted the door so that he could come, and Rowjee Rajah, seeing her sitting there upon the tomb

in all her beauty, and with the child in her arms, fell on his knees before her, and cried out, "Is this a dream? Or are you indeed my dear wife, returned to life?"

And Sodewa Bai answered, "I am in truth your wife, and I am alive, and this is our child who was born after I was brought here to the temple. You thought I was dead because someone has stolen my golden necklace, and so my soul went out after it. But it must be that whoever wears it takes it off at night, for then I waken, and am myself again."

Then for the first time Rowjee Rajah noticed that the beads were no longer round her neck. So he bade her fear nothing, for that he would assuredly recover them and return; and going back to the palace, which he reached in the early morning, he summoned before him the whole household.

Then, upon the neck of the negress he saw Sodewa Bai's missing necklace, and seizing it, ordered the guards to take the woman to prison. The negress, frightened, confessed all that she had done, and also that it was the Prudhan's daughter who had told her to steal the necklace, and had paid her well for doing it. When the young Rajah learned this he ordered that the Prudhan's daughter should be imprisoned for life, and he and his father and mother all went together to the temple, and placing the lost beads

round Sodewa Bai's neck, brought her to life, and conducted her and her child back in triumph with them to the palace. Then, at news of how the young Ranee had been restored to life, there was great joy throughout all that country, and many days were spent in rejoicings in honor of that happy event ; and for the rest of their lives the old Rajah and Ranee, and Rowjee Rajah and Sodewa Bai, and all the family, lived in health and happiness.

Sodewa Bai—The Lady Good Fortune.



"IS THIS A DREAM ? OR ARE YOU INDEED MY DEAR WIFE ?"



IX

BRAVE SEVENTEE BAI

SIU RAJAH was a very rich and powerful ruler who lived many hundreds of years ago. He had seven sons, all of whom he loved passionately, but the eldest, who was named Logedas, was the dearest to his heart.

Now the Wuzeer of that kingdom had one daughter who was as fair as the morning, and beloved by all for her gentleness and goodness. She was called Seventee Bai, the Daisy Lady. Logedas Rajah had seen her, and loved her, and he wished to make her his wife, but when his father, Siu Rajah heard of this he became very angry. He said to Logedas, "Of all I have that is rich and magnificent I have denied you nothing. I would be very glad to see you married, and there are the daughters of many neighboring Rajahs for you to choose among. Any one of them I would gladly welcome as your wife, but for you to marry the daughter of my Wuzeer is lowering your own dignity, and mine, too. I tell you plainly that if you make Seventee Bai your wife, you shall be driven out from my kingdom in spite of all my love for you. Moreover, you shall never

reign here, as Rajah, but after my death one of your brothers shall take your place and become ruler over the kingdom."

But Logedas Rajah loved Seventee Bai so dearly that in spite of all his father said, he took her to be his wife. Then Siu Rajah kept his word, and ordered Logedas to leave the country at once. But because of the love he felt for his son, he would not send him out as a beggar, but gave him jewels, and elephants, and camels, and horses, and palenquins and attendants; also, Logedas Rajah's sister, Parbuttee Bai, who loved him tenderly, and did not wish to be parted from him, was allowed to go with him.

The young Prince and his wife and sister set out in great magnificence, but after they had gone some distance from the palace, Logedas Rajah sent back all the attendants, and everything his father had given him, except the elephant he rode, and the palenquin carried by the two men, in which his wife and sister travelled. Soon after the Prince and his companions entered a dense jungle, and here they lost their way. For some time they wandered about in great misery. Their food was soon gone, and they then had nothing to eat but roots and berries, and all night long they were terrified by the cries of wild beasts in search of prey.

At last one time when the others were sleeping,

Logedas Rajah arose, and laying aside his royal robes, he dressed himself as a fakeer,* and set off alone to try to find help or a way out of the jungle. He took neither money nor jewels with him for fear of meeting robbers, but he saw no one, and after wandering about for some time, he tried to return to the others; but he had again lost his way, and could not find where he had left them; every step he took, only led him deeper into the jungle, and away from them.

Meanwhile the Wuzeer's daughter had awakened and had found Parbuttee Bai crying bitterly. "Sister, dear," she said, "what is the matter?" "Alas," answered Parbuttee Bai, "I am crying because in my dreams I thought Logedas had dressed himself as a fakeer, and had run off into the jungle and left us, and when I awoke I found it was all true. There lie his royal robes, but he himself has gone. Better for us that we had died than that such a misfortune had come upon us."

"You must not cry," said Seventee Bai, "for if you do, the palkee-bearers will find Logedas Rajah has left us, and then they too will run away, and if we are left entirely alone, we will never be able to escape from this jungle. Keep a brave heart, and I will dress myself in the clothes Logedas Rajah has left, and pretend that I am he. The bearers will be

* A holy beggar.

deceived, and think it is only I who am lost, and will stay with us ; and it will not seem strange to them that in such a wild place, some wild beasts should have devoured me."

"Sister, you speak wisely," answered Parbuttee Bai, "and we will do as you say."

So Seventee Bai dressed in her husband's clothes, and the next morning she mounted the elephant, just as he had always done, and ordered the bearers to take up the palkee with Parbuttee Bai in it, and again attempt to find their way out of the jungle. The palkee-bearers wondered much to themselves what had become of Seventee Bai, and they said to one another, "How selfish and fickle are the rich. See now! our young Rajah married the Wuzeer's daughter and brought all this trouble on himself and he seemed to love her as his own soul ; but now that she has been devoured by some cruel animal in this wild jungle, he does not mourn for her, or seem to care in the least."

So they again journeyed on, and after some days, by good fortune, found that they were getting out of the jungle. Soon after they came to an open plain and saw before them a large city. As they came near it, some of the people ran out to see who they were, and then hurried back to the palace of their Rajah, and told him that a strange Rajah, very handsome,

and richly dressed, and riding an elephant, was coming across the plain from the jungle. With him was a palkee in which was his wife—a most beautiful Princess.

On hearing this the Rajah of the country went out to meet Seventee Bai, and asked her who she was and why she had come there. Seventee Bai replied, "My name is Seventee Rajah. My father was angry with me and drove me from his kingdom, and I and my wife, Parbuttee Bai, have been wandering for many days in the jungle, where we lost our way. But at last we came to this plain and saw your city, and we pray of you, out of your kindness, to give us food and help."

The Rajah and his attendants thought they had never before seen so brave and noble-looking a Prince, and the Rajah asked if Seventee Bai would take service with him, promising that if she would, he would give her the handsomest house in the city, and all the money she could desire. The Wuzeer's daughter answered still pretending to be a Prince, "I am not used to serving under any one, but you are so good to us in receiving us so kindly, and in offering us your protection, that I will take whatever place you choose to give me, and will obey you faithfully in all things." So the Rajah made Seventee Bai his councillor, and gave her a magnificent house to

live in, and paid her a great sum of money every year. She was now very important in the kingdom, but always she was so gentle and kind to those about her that she was beloved and honored by all. She and Parbuttee lived there in the city for some time, and they would have been very happy had it not been for the thought of Logedas Rajah, and of all that he might be suffering. All the while Seventee Bai acted her part as a young Rajah so well that no one ever suspected she was a woman. Also she forbade Parbuttee Bai ever to speak of their adventures to any one, or even to make a great friend of anybody, lest sometime their secret should slip from her.

Now the King's palace was on the side of the city nearest to the jungle, and one night his Ranees were awakened by loud and piercing shrieks coming from that direction ; so she awoke her husband, and said, "I am so frightened by that terrible noise that I cannot sleep. Send some one to see what is the matter." And the Rajah called all his attendants, and said, "Go down toward the jungle and see what that noise is about." But his people were all afraid, for the night was very dark, and the noise very dreadful, and they said to him : "We are afraid to go. We dare not do so by ourselves. Send for this young Seventee Rajah who is such a favorite of yours, and tell him to go. He is brave, and not afraid of anything. You have

made him your chief favorite, and what is the use of his being your favorite if he is not willing to oblige you?"

So they all went to Seventee Bai's house, and as soon as she knew what was the matter, she jumped up and said she would willingly go down to the jungle and find what was happening there.

Now the noise that had frightened the Ranee was made by a Rakshas that lived in the jungle. A small stream ran down between the jungle and the city, and the Rakshas had crossed it in order to come and prowl about the city. But when he wished to return home, he found the stream had risen because of a rain that had fallen, and he could no longer step across it, but would be obliged to wade through it, and Rakshas do not like to step into running water, and he was screaming with rage and fear. But as soon as he saw Seventee Bai coming, he changed himself into the shape of an old woman wrapped about in a glittering saree,* and the Wuzeer's daughter did not guess he was really a Rakshas. She spoke to him kindly, and said, "Old woman, why are you weeping and crying out. Do you know that your cries have disturbed the Ranee?" The Rakshas answered, "Alas! that this should be; but I live in a hut in the jungle, and I came to the city on an errand for my sick

* The principal garment of a Hindoo woman.

daughter. The stream was then so small that I could easily step over it, but now it has risen because of the rain, and I am so old and feeble I am afraid to try to wade through it." Then Seventee Bai, who was always kind, and ready to help the unfortunate, said, "You poor old woman, I am young and strong. Get upon my shoulders and I will carry you over." So the Rakshas mounted on her shoulders, and Seventee Bai held him firmly by his glittering saree, and stepped down into the stream. But with every step she took, the Rakshas grew heavier and heavier; Seventee Bai could not understand why the old woman, who had seemed so light at first should grow so heavy. She stumbled, and could hardly reach the further bank. She managed to do so, however, and at once the old woman sprang down from her shoulders and she saw that it really was a Rakshas she had carried over. She still kept hold of the saree, and after trying to pull it from her, the Rakshas slipped out of it, and fled away screaming into the jungle.

Seventee Bai folded the saree and hid it in her garments, and then returned to the palace and told the Rajah she had found an old woman crying beside the stream because she was afraid to cross it. She said nothing, however, about any Rakshas for she did not wish to frighten the Ranee. After that she went home and gave the saree to Parbuttee Bai.



SHE STILL KEPT HOLD OF THE SAREE BUT THE RAKSHAS SLIPPED OUT AND FLED INTO THE JUNGLE

Sometime after this two of the Rajah's little daughters came to visit Parbuttee Bai, and she happened to be wearing the Rakshas' saree. The little Princesses were amazed at its brightness and glitter and when they went home they said to their mother, "Seventee Rajah's wife has the most beautiful saree we have ever seen. It shines like the sun so that it quite dazzled our eyes when we saw it. You have none that is half so bright or rich. Why do you not get one like it?"

When their mother heard this, she became very envious and the next time her husband, the Rajah, came to visit her, she said to him, "I hear that your servant's wife is dressed more richly than your own Ranee. Parbuttee Bai has a saree far richer than any of mine. I beg you to get me one like hers, for I cannot rest until I have one equally costly and glittering."

Then the Rajah sent for Seventee Bai and said, "Tell me where your wife got her beautiful golden saree, for the Ranee desires to have one like it." Seventee Bai answered, "Noble master, that saree came from a very far country—even the country of the Rakshas. It is impossible to get one like it here, but if you will give me permission, I will set out in search of that country, and if I find it I will bring home a saree of the same kind for your Ranee." Then the Rajah was very much pleased and ordered

Seventee Bai to go. So she returned to her house and bade good-bye to Parbuttee Bai, and warned her to be wise and silent. Then, mounting her horse, she rode away in search of the Rakshas' country.

For many days she journeyed on through the jungle, stopping to rest now and then at little villages on her road. At last, after having travelled several hundred miles, she came to a beautiful city beside a great river. On the city walls a proclamation was printed in large letters. Seventee Bai asked some of the people she met what it meant and they told her it was to say that the Rajah's daughter would marry anyone who could tame a certain pony belonging to the Rajah.

"And has no one ever been able to do this?" asked Seventee Bai. "Many have tried," they answered, but all have failed, for the pony is so wild and fierce that it will not allow any man to come near it without trying to destroy him. It was born on the same day as the Princess and she has vowed that she will not marry anyone unless he can first tame and ride that pony." "To-morrow I will myself try to ride it," said Seventee Bai. "You can try if you like," said the people, "but it is very dangerous and you are but a youth; you have not yet come to the strength of your manhood, and how can you hope to succeed when so many who are greater and stronger than you have

failed." "God gives strength to the weak, and he will help me," answered Seventee Bai.

So she went to sleep and early the next morning they beat a drum all around the town to let everyone know that still another was going to try to ride the pony, and all the people flocked out of their houses to see the sight. The pony was in a field near the river, and as soon as Seventee Bai came into the field, and it saw her, it rushed at her as if to trample her to death and tear her to pieces. But Seventee Bai was not afraid. She was very quick, and she seized it by the mane and held it firmly in such a way that it could neither strike her with its fore legs, nor kick her. The pony tried to shake her off, and then, because her hand was the hand of a woman, and not of a man, it allowed her to hold it and even mount upon its back. After that it became quite gentle and tame, and Seventee Bai, to show its obedience, put spurs to it and made it jump across the river (which was a jump of three miles) and back again; and this it did three times, for it was strong and agile, and had never been ridden before. When all the people saw this they shouted for joy, and ran down to the river bank and brought Seventee Bai, riding in triumph on the pony, to see the Rajah. And the Rajah said, "Oh, best of men, and worthy of all honor, you have won my daughter." So he took Seventee

Bai to the palace and paid her great honor, and gave her jewels and rich clothes, and horses and camels innumerable. The Rajah's daughter also came out to greet the one who had won her hand. Then the Rajah said, "To-morrow shall be the wedding day." But Seventee Bai replied, "Great Rajah and beautiful Princess, I am going on an important errand for my own Rajah. Let me, I pray you, first do the thing I have set out to do. Then on my way home, I will stop here for her and take her back with me to where my wife, Parbuttee Bai, is awaiting me. Then my own Rajah will give us a magnificent wedding, and this I am sure he would wish to do for me." The Rajah and his daughter were both pleased with this, and he said, "It is well spoken. Do not let us hinder you from doing your duty, and on your return, my daughter will be ready to go with you."

The Rajah and a great train of attendants then accompanied Seventee Bai to the borders of their land. There they bade her farewell, and the Wuzeer's daughter rode on again in search of the Rakshas country. After a time she came to another fine city and here she rested for some time in a house that was open to travellers.

Now the Rajah of this country had a very beautiful daughter, who was his only child, and he had built for her a splendid bath. It was like a little sea,

and all around it were marble walls and a great hedge of spikes on top of the walls ; so grand it was that from a distance the whole thing looked like a castle. The young Princess was very fond of this bath, and she had vowed that she would never marry anyone but who could jump entirely over it on horseback. She had vowed this some years before Seventee Bai came to the city, and it had grieved the Rajah and Ranee very much, for they wished to see their daughter happily married. Often they said to her, "We shall both be dead before you get a husband. What folly is this, to expect that anyone should be able to jump over those high marble walls, with the spikes at the top. No one could ever possibly do it." The Princess only answered, "Then I will never marry. I will never have a husband who has not jumped those walls."

At last the Rajah caused it to be proclaimed throughout the land that he would give great riches and his daughter in marriage to whoever could jump, on horseback, over the Princess' bath.

All this Seventee Bai learnt as soon as she arrived in town, and she said, "To-morrow I will try to jump over the Princess' bath." The country people said to her, "You speak foolishly ; it is quite impossible." She replied, "Heaven, in which I trust, will help me." So next day she rose up and saddled her pony and

led him in front of the palace, and there she sprang on his back, and going at full gallop, leapt over the marble walls, over the spikes high up in the air, and down onto the ground on the other side of the bath ; and this she did three times, which, when the Rajah saw, he was filled with joy. He sent for Seventee Bai, and said, " Tell me your name, brave Prince ; for you are the only man in the world who could have won my daughter." Then the Wuzeer's daughter replied, " My name is Seventee Rajah. I have come from a far country on an errand for my Rajah. I am in search of the country of the Rakshas that I may bring him from thence, a saree for his Ranee. Permit me, I pray of you, to go upon my journey, for I am in haste, and if I live to return, I will come through this country and claim my bride." To this the Rajah agreed, and Seventee Bai again set forth upon her journey.

After travelling hundreds of miles further, sometimes over open plains, and sometimes through thick jungles, she came to another city. This was even more beautiful than the others. It was built beside a lake ; all around it were blue hills, and there were many little gardens stretching down to the lake, and filled with pomegranates, jessamine, and many other beautiful fruits and flowers.

Seventee Bai, tired with her long journey, rode up to a Malee's house, and asked for food, and a

shelter for the night. The Malee and his family made her welcome, and that night as they sat around the fire cooking their evening meal, they began to talk of a strange dream their Rajah had had. "What is this dream?" asked Seventee Bai. They told her that ever since he was a child, their Rajah had dreamed, once in ever so often, of a fair tree growing in a large garden. "The stem of the tree," they told her, "is of silver, the leaves are pure gold, and the fruit is bunches of pearls. The Rajah has asked all his wise men and seers where such a tree is to be found, but they all tell him there is no such tree in the world, therefore, he is dissatisfied and melancholy. Moreover, the Princess, his daughter, hearing of her father's dream, has determined to marry no one but he who can find this marvelous tree." "It is very odd," said Seventee Bai; and, their supper being over, she dragged her mattress outside the little house (as a man would have done), and, placing it in a sheltered nook near the lake, knelt down, as her custom was, to say her prayers before going to sleep.

As she knelt there, with her eyes fixed on the dark water of the lake, she saw, on a sudden, a glorious shining light coming slowly toward her, nearer and nearer it came, until it reached the steps leading down from the garden to the water, and then Seventee Bai saw the light shone from a great diamond,

the size and shape of an egg, that was carried in the mouth of a huge cobra. The cobra, still carrying it, crawled up the steps to the garden, and there laid it down, and went away in search of food. After some time he returned, and again taking the diamond in his mouth, left as he had come, taking it away with him after his evening meal. On the third night the same thing happened. Then Seventee Bai determined to kill the cobra, and if possible, gain possession of the diamond. So early the next morning she went to the bazaar and ordered a blacksmith to make for her a very strong iron trap that would kill anything that was caught in it. This the blacksmith did, and that evening, just before the time when the cobra generally came to the garden, Seventee Bai put the trap near the steps that led down to the water, and covered it over with sweet-scented flowers and fruits such as cobras love. Then she climbed up and hid herself in a tree near by, to see what would happen.

At the usual time the cobra came, carrying the diamond in his mouth, and laid it down upon the upper step. But instead of crawling away into the jungle, he at once went over to the flowers and fruit that the Wuzeer's daughter had laid over the trap. Scarcely had he begun to enjoy them, however, when the trap caught him and held him so tightly that he was soon quite dead.

Seventee Bai did not come down to the trap at once, however, as she feared the cobra might not be quite dead. But as soon as it was light, she climbed down and went to look at the snake. He was very still and lifeless, and Seventee Bai now dared to take up the diamond and look at it. In the light of the morning it was even more bright and sparkling, so that she was filled with wonder at its beauty. She was weary with her night of watching, and still holding the diamond she went down to the lake to bathe her face and hands before returning to the house. No sooner, however, did the diamond touch the water, then it rolled back like a wall on either hand and left a pathway leading down across the bottom of the lake. Seventee Bai wished to see where it went and followed the path down between the walls of water till she came to a great door. This she opened, and immediately found herself in a garden more beautiful than any she had ever seen on earth. There were fountains and tall trees laden with rich fruits, bright birds sang among the branches, the ground was covered with flowers strange and beautiful, such as she had never seen before, and in the centre was a tree more wonderful than all the rest; the stem was of silver, the leaves were golden, and the fruit was clusters of pearls. Swinging among the branches sat a young girl of most wondrous beauty. Her eyes

were like stars, her skin as white as ivory, and her hair fell about her like a shining cloud. She was singing to herself, but when she saw Seventee Bai, she cried aloud, "Ah, my lord, why do you come here?" Seventee Bai answered, "May I not come to see you, beautiful lady?" "You may come, since you have somehow found the way," said the lady, "but you are in great danger. If my father sees you here he will kill you. He is a cobra, and he made this garden for me to play in, and here I have played these many, many years all alone, for he lets me see no one, not even our own subjects. Speak, beautiful Prince, tell me how you came here, and who you are?" Seventee Bai answered, "I am Seventee Rajah, and I came here by way of a pathway that leads down through the lake. But do not fear for me! I have killed the cobra, and you need no longer live here all alone." Then the lady was very joyful, because she was freed from the power of the cobra. She told the Wuzeer's daughter that her name was Hera Bai (The Diamond Lady), and that now the cobra was dead all the vast treasures he had gathered together under the lake were hers, and she said to Seventee Bai, "Stay with me here, and I will be your wife and you shall be the king of all this country."

But Seventee Bai answered, "That may not be, for I have been sent upon an errand by my Rajah,

and have a long and difficult journey before me; but if I live to return, then I will certainly come here for you and take you with me to my own land." Then Hera Bai said, "You have spoken wisely, and I will wait here until you return. But take this flute (and she gave the Wuzeer's daughter a little golden flute that she drew out from among the fold of her saree). Whenever you wish to see me, or are in need of my aid, go into the jungle and play upon the flute and before the sound ceases I will be there; but do not play it in the towns, nor yet amid a crowd." Then Seventee Bai put the flute in the folds of her dress and she bade farewell to Hera Bai and went away.

When she came back to the Malee's cottage, the Malee's wife said to her, "We became alarmed about you, sir; for two days we have seen nothing of you; and we thought you must have gone away. Where have you been so long?" Seventee Bai answered, "I had business of my own in the bazaar" (for she did not choose to tell the Malee's wife that she had been under the lake). "Now go and ask the Rajah's Wuzeer when he can see me, for I must speak with him before I leave the city."

So the Malee's wife went upon the errand, and while she was away Seventee Bai stole down to the edge of the lake and there reverently burned the

cobra's body; this she did both for the sake of Hera Bai, and because the cobra is a sacred animal.

Soon after the Malee's wife returned and told Seventee Bai that the Wuzeer would see her the next day. So on the morrow she went to the palace and was brought before the Wuzeer. Now he had wondered much why the stranger wished to see him, and he said, "Who are you, and what is your errand?" Then Seventee Bai answered, "I am Seventee Rajah. I am going on a long journey for my Rajah and happening to pass through this city, I came to pay you a friendly visit." Then the Wuzeer became quite cordial and talked to Seventee Bai about the country and the city and the Rajah and his wonderful dream. And Seventee Bai said, "What do you suppose your Rajah would give to anyone who showed him the tree of which he has so often dreamed?" The Wuzeer answered, "I know what he would give, for I have heard him say. He would give his daughter in marriage and the half of his kingdom beside." Then Seventee Bai said, "If that is to be the reward, it may be that I can show him the tree."

She then went away into the jungle and blew upon the little golden flute and immediately Hera Bai appeared before her. "What do you wish, my dear one?" asked the cobra's daughter. "I would like," answered Seventee Bai, "to show to the Rajah

of this country, the tree that stands in the middle of the garden where I first saw you." "That is a wish that is easily granted," answered Hera Bai. "Invite the Rajah and his court to come to this spot tomorrow evening, then blow upon the flute and the tree will appear before them."

Seventee Bai at once returned to the city and sent word to the Wuzeer that if the Rajah and all his principal men would come to a certain place in the jungle the next evening, he would show them the tree. The Rajah might look at it all night if he chose, but he could not have it for his own.

The Rajah was greatly pleased when he received this message, and the next evening he and all his court came to the place the Wuzeer's daughter had named. Seventee Bai was already there, and as soon as they arrived she took out her little golden flute and played upon it. At once, there in the great dark jungle, appeared the garden, with all its trees and birds and flowers that Seventee Bai had seen down under the lake. It was all as clear as day, and in the midst of the garden was the silver tree with its golden leaves and fruit of pearls, just as the Rajah had dreamed about it.

Then the Rajah and all his court were filled with wonder and admiration. They entered the garden and plucked and ate of the fruits and listened to the

birds and drank of the waters of the fountain. But when morning came, it all disappeared.

The Rajah was willing to keep the promise he had made, and gave to the Wuzeer's daughter one-half of his kingdom. He would also, at once, have had her marry the Princess, for he thought within himself, "A man who can turn the jungle into a paradise is worthy to be my son-in-law, whoever he may be." But Seventee Bai said, "I beg that you will allow me first to go on my Rajah's errand, and then on my homeward journey, I will stop here for the Princess. Then, instead of half of the kingdom, you shall give me treasures to the like amount, and I will take your daughter home with me, for I know it would be the wish of my master to give us a magnificent wedding, and I already have a wife awaiting me there."

To this plan the Rajah agreed, and the Wuzeer's daughter again set out upon her journey. Far, far she travelled, but still she did not come to the Rakshas country, nor could she learn where it was, though she questioned every one she met. At last, in her difficulty, she thought of Hera Bai, and taking out the little golden flute, she blew upon it. At once Hera Bai appeared in all her beauty. "Dear one," she said, "what can you desire of me?" "I wish to know where the kingdom of the Rakshas lies," said

Seventee Bai, "and how I can get there." "Alas! and why should you desire to go there?" asked Hera Bai. "It is a dangerous place and scarcely might you reach there alive. The borders of that kingdom are guarded by hundreds of thousands of Rakshas,—more than there are trees on the face of the earth; they are very fierce and terrible, and so watchful that not even a sparrow could fly past them without being seen. Moreover, you could do nothing against them, for though they would see you instantly they themselves are invisible. Be guided by me, dear one, and do not seek further for that land." But Seventee Bai answered, "Whatever the dangers, I must still try to reach that kingdom, for I have promised my Rajah that I would." Then Hera Bai said, "If that is so, I must manage to find some way of sending you there without your losing your life." She then drew from her hand a glorious ring, and placed it on the finger of the Wuzeer's daughter. "This ring," she said, "will make you invisible. Do you see yonder far-off mountain that looks so blue in the distance? You must climb that mountain first of all, then when you have reached the top you must turn the stone of the ring I have given you toward the palm of your hand. At once you will fall down through the earth and into the presence of the daughter of the Rakshas' Rajah, for that mountain is exactly over the palace

her father has built for her. That Princess and I are dear friends, and if you tell her I have sent you, she will do all she can to help you." So saying, Hera Bai disappeared and Seventee Bai hastened onward toward the mountain.

Having reached its top, she turned the ring so that the stone was toward the palm of her hand, as she had been told to do. Instantly she found herself falling down through the earth, down, down, down, deeper and deeper, until at last she arrived in a beautiful room, richly furnished, and hung round with cloth of gold. In every direction, as far as the eye could reach, were thousands and thousands of Rakshas, and in the centre of the room was a gold and ivory throne, on which sat the most beautiful Princess that it is possible to imagine. She was tall and noble looking; her black hair was bound by long strings of pearls; her dress was of fine spun gold, and round her waist was clasped a girdle of restless, throbbing, light-giving diamonds; her neck and her arms were covered with costly jewels; but brighter than all shone her bright eyes, which looked full of gentle majesty. Now though the ring made Seventee Bai invisible to the Rakshas' guard, the Princess could still see her, and she cried out in amazement, as the Wuzer's daughter suddenly appeared before her, "Who are you?" she asked, "and how came you here?" "I

am Seventee Rajah," Seventee Bai answered, "and the Lady Hera has promised to be my bride. It is by the power of a magic ring she gave me that I have been able to come here and to come without harm."

The Princess, on hearing this, made the Wuzeer's daughter welcome, but said, "You must know you are in great danger, for if these guards my father has placed around me should see you they would instantly tear you to pieces, and even I could do nothing to save you. Tell me, why did you come?" Seventee Bai answered, "I came because I had heard much of this country, and knew there was such a place. Also Hera Bai spoke of you. Tell me, beautiful one, what is your name, and how is it that you are here all alone except for the guards?" The lady answered, "I am the Rakshas' Rajah's only daughter, and my name is Tara Bai, the Star Lady; and because my father loves me very much, he has built this palace for me, and has set this guard of thousands of Rakshas all around me, so that no one may come near without his permission. My father and mother are very grand and powerful; they keep such state that I seldom see them; indeed, it is several years since I have seen them, but now I shall go to them at once and beg them to show you mercy, and give you their protection; for though you and I have spoken so few words to each other, I already love you

very much." So saying, she arose to go to her father's court, bidding Seventee Bai await her return.

When the Rajah and Ranee of the Rakshas heard that their daughter was coming to see them, they were very much surprised, and said, "What can be the matter with our daughter? Can she be ill? Or can our Tara Bai be unhappy in the beautiful house we have given her?" And they said to her, "Daughter, why do you come? What is the matter? She answered, "Oh, my father, I have come to tell you I should like to be married. Cannot you find some beautiful Prince to be my husband?" Then the Rajah laughed, and said, "You are but a child still, my daughter; nevertheless, if you wish for a husband, and if any Prince comes here and asks for you in marriage, we will let you wed him." She said, "Then if some brave and beautiful Prince were indeed to get through the guard you have placed around the palace, you would protect him for my sake, and not allow your Rakshas to tear him to pieces?" The Rajah answered, "If such a one come, he shall be safe." Then Tara Bai was very joyful, and ran and brought Seventee Bai, and said to her father and mother, "See here is Seventee Rajah, the young Prince of whom I spoke." And when the Rajah and Ranee saw Seventee Bai, they were greatly astonished and could not think how she had managed to reach

their land, and they thought she must be very brave and wise to have done so. And because also Seventee Bai looked a very noble Prince, they were more than willing that she should marry Tara Bai, and they said, "Seventee Rajah, we are willing you should be our son-in-law, for you look good and true, and you must be brave, to have come so long and dangerous a journey for your wife; now, therefore, you shall be married; the whole land is open to you, and all that we have is yours." But Seventee Bai begged that instead of being married at once she might take the Rakshas' daughter back with her to her own country. "For there," she said, "I already have a wife who is watching and waiting for me anxiously; and there we will celebrate the wedding with all due magnificence."

To this the Rakshas' Rajah and Ranee agreed. They allowed Seventee Bai to take away their daughter with her, and they also gave her camels and horses and elephants, and a guard of a hundred million Rakshas, and great bundles of glittering garments, and hangings and gold and silver and jewels. Each bundle was filled with as much as one Rakshas could carry,—that is enough to fill a large house.

So Seventee Bai and Tara Bai set out for the country where Seventee Bai had been living. On her way she stopped for the other Princesses who had been promised to her in marriage, and the treasures that

had been given her, and when these treasures were all gathered together, the Wuzeer's daughter was richer than the richest Rajah in the world.

After weeks and months of journeying, the whole train drew near the city where Seventee Bai had left Parbuttee Bai. The news of their coming was brought to the friendly Rajah—(Seventee Bai's master)—and he, not knowing who they were, became at once very much alarmed, thinking some strange Rajah was coming to make war on him. But as soon as Seventee Bai heard of this, she sent a messenger to him on a swift horse, to say, "Be not alarmed; it is only thy servant, Seventee Rajah, returning from the errand on which thou didst send him." Then the Rajah's heart was light, and he ordered a royal salute to be fired, and went out with all his court to meet Seventee Bai, and they all went together in a state procession into the city. And Seventee Bai said to the Rajah, "You sent your servant to the Rakshas' country to bring a golden saree for the Ranee. Behold, I have done as you wish." And so saying, she gave to the Rajah five of the Rakshas' bundles of rich hangings and jewelled garments, which was five housesful. And to the Wuzeer she gave two bundles, which was two housesful of things. The rest of the treasures were stored away in great storehouses which were built for them, and all of the Rakshas attendants were sent

back to their own country, for there were so many of them that Seventee Bai feared they would eat up all the food in the land, so there would be nothing left for the people who lived there. Three of the Princesses she had brought with her lived in the house with Parbuttee Bai, but Hera Bai and Tara Bai, because of their high rank, and their great wealth, had a splendid palace of their own in the jungle, and no one was even allowed to know where it was except Seventee Bai.

And now the Rajah's little daughter said to her father, "Father, I do not think there is another Prince in the whole world so brave and beautiful as Seventee Rajah. I would rather have him for a husband than anyone else." And the Rajah said, "Daughter, I am very willing that you should marry him." So it was settled that Seventee Bai should marry this little Princess also, at the same time that she married the others. And she said to the Rajah, "I shall be proud and happy, indeed, to be your son-in-law; but I must have a very magnificent wedding; more magnificent than any that was ever held in the world before, and if you are willing, I would like to send into all the countries round and invite all their Rajahs, and Ranees, and principal men to be present. This will take time. Allow me, I pray you, a year at least to make preparations." And the Rajah agreed.

The Wuzeer's daughter was now so rich and powerful that even the Rajah himself was scarcely greater in the kingdom; but still she was sad and troubled, and she said to Parbuttee Bai, "I have gathered together all this treasure for Logedas Rajah only, and always I hoped that somewhere in my journeyings I might find him, or hear of him. But I have not, and I know not where to seek him. He may even now be wandering about the world, a miserable and unhappy beggar, while all this wealth is his if he were but here to claim it." Then Parbuttee Bai said, "You have told me that Hera Bai and Tara Bai are very wise,—wiser, indeed, than any other Princesses. Why do you not go to them and ask their advice?" This seemed to the Wuzeer's daughter, a wise plan, and that very day she went to the palace in the jungle where the two Princesses lived. There she told them the story of Logedas Rajah, but always she spoke of him as her friend, and not her husband, and the Princesses still believed her to be herself a Rajah, as she seemed.

Then Hera Bai, who was even cleverer than Tara Bai, said to her, "You have told us that when your friend left you, he was dressed as a fakeer, and had with him neither money nor jewels. He would not know how to earn anything, and, doubtless, as you fear, he is still going about as a beggar. Your best

plan will be to send out word through all the lands, both far and near, that you are about to give a great feast for the poor of all countries as a thank-offering for all the blessings God has given you. Beggars will come flocking from every country, and perhaps among them you will find Logedas Rajah."

This plan pleased the Wuzeer's daughter and she determined to do as Hera Bai advised. She caused two long tables to be spread in the jungle, and here, day after day, hundreds of poor from all parts of the world were feasted; and every day, for six months, Seventee Bai and Parbuttee Bai walked down the long rows of people, pretending they had come to see that every one was properly served, but really looking for Logedas Rajah, but they found him not.

Then at last one day, Seventee Bai saw among the others, a man more wretched looking than all the rest, he was dressed in rags, his hair was tangled, and his face thin and wrinkled, in his hand he had a wooden bowl such as fakeers carry about for collecting meat and scraps of bread. She touched Parbuttee Bai and said, "See, Parbuttee, there is your brother." It was indeed Logedas, though terribly changed and altered, and seeing him so poor and pitiful, Parbuttee Bai began to cry. But Seventee Bai said, "Do not cry. Go home quickly. I will take care of him." When Parbuttee Bai had gone, she called

one of the guards, and said to him, "Catch hold of that man and put him in prison."

The guard made haste to obey her. Logedas Rajah said, "Why do you seize me? I have done no wrong?" But Seventee Bai told the guard not to heed anything he might say, but to take him to prison instantly; for she did not wish the people around to discover how interested she was in him.

When they put him in prison, he begged them to say what was to be done to him. "Oh, you will certainly be hanged to-morrow," the guards told him, "or perhaps, if you like it better, beheaded in front of the palace."

As soon as Seventee Bai got home, she sent for her head servants, and said to them, "Go at once to the prison, and order the guard to give up to you the fakeer I gave into their charge; bring him here in a palanquin, and see that he does not escape." Then Seventee Bai ordered them to lock up Logedas in a distant part of the palace, and commanded that he should be washed and dressed in new clothes, and given food, and that a barber should be sent to cut his hair and trim his beard. Then Logedas said to his keepers, "See how good this Rajah is to me. Surely he will not hang me after this?" They answered, "Do not depend on that; he only thinks it will make a finer sight if you are dressed up and made smart."

Afterward Seventee Bai sent for all the greatest doctors in the kingdom and said to them, "If a Rajah has wandered about in the jungle for twelve years and has lost all his princely beauty, how long will it take you to restore his beauty to him?" They replied, "With care and attention, it may be done in six months." "Very well," said Seventee Bai, "there is a friend of mine here in my palace who is such a case. Take him and treat him well, and at the end of six months I shall expect to see him restored to all his natural health and strength."

So Logedas was placed under the doctors' care, but all this time he had no idea who Seventee Bai was, or why he was treated in such a manner. Every day his wife, still dressed as a Rajah, came to see him and talk to him, and he soon lost all fear of what might be done to him, and only wondered that such a great Prince should be so kind and gracious to him.

Now Seventee Bai's birthday had been chosen for the day of her wedding with the Rajahs' daughters, and immense preparations had been made for it. Tents of cloth of gold had been pitched outside the city walls in a great square twelve miles long and twelve miles broad. These were for the accommodation of the visiting Rajahs, and in the centre was a larger tent than any of the rest; it was covered with

jewels, shining like a great golden temple, and in this they were to assemble for the wedding.

Then Seventee Bai said to Parbuttee Bai, "On my birthday I will give you back your brother." But Parbuttee Bai was vexed and said, "I cannot bear to think of him; it is such a terrible thing that the once handsome Logedas is none other than that miserable fakeer."

Seventee Bai smiled. "In truth," she said, "I think you will find him again altered, and for the better. You cannot think what a change rest and care have made in him; but he does not know who we are, and as you value my happiness, tell no one now that I am not the Rajah." "Indeed I will not, dearest sister," answered Parbuttee Bai. "I should in truth be sorry to vex you after all you have done for me; for owing to you have we lived here in comfort and luxury for all these years, and I do not think as clever a woman as you was ever before born in this world."

Among the guests who had been invited to the wedding of Seventee Bai and the Princesses were Siu Rajah and his wife, and the Wuzeer, Seventee Bai's father, and also her mother. Seventee Bai had arranged thrones for all of them made of gold and emeralds, and diamonds, and rubies, and ivory. And she ordered that in the seat of honor on her left-hand side should be placed the Wuzeer, her

father, and next to him her mother, and next to them Siu Rajah and his wife, and after them all the other Rajahs and Ranees, according to their rank ; and all the Rajahs and Ranees wondered much that the place of honor should have been given to a Wuzeer. Then Seventee Bai took her most costly Rajah dress, and ordered that Logedas Rajah should be clothed in it and escorted to the tent ; and she took off the man's clothes which she had worn and dressed herself in a saree. When she was dressed in it, she looked even more beautiful as a woman than she had as a man. And she went to the tent leading Parbuttee Bai, while with her came Hera Bai and Tara Bai of more than mortal beauty, and the three other Princesses, all clothed in the most costly robes. Then before all the Rajahs and Ranees, Seventee Bai knelt down at Logedas Rajah's feet, and said to him, "I am your true wife. O husband, have you forgotten her whom you left in the jungle with Parbuttee Bai twelve years ago ? See ! I am she ; and behold these rich jewels, these tents of gold, these hangings of priceless worth, these elephants, camels, horses, attendants—all this wealth, indeed, is yours, as I am yours, for I have gathered it together for you and you only."

Then Logedas Rajah was so overcome with joy that he wept aloud, and kissed Seventee Bai's face

and hands, and Siu Rajah arose and said, "My noble daughter, you have saved my son from misery and have done more wisely and bravely than any woman in all the world before. I am proud and happy to have you as a daughter-in-law, and may all honor and blessing be yours from this day on and forever."

And all the assembled Rajahs and Ranees cried, "Did anyone ever hear of a woman doing such great deeds!" and they were filled with wonder. But more than any other was the good Rajah astonished, whom Seventee Bai had served so well for twelve years, and whose daughter she was to have married that day.

It was then agreed that Logedas Rajah should be newly married to Seventee Bai and that his six brothers (who had come to the wedding with their father) should be married to the other six Princesses, and this pleased every one. The wedding rejoicings lasted for twelve days, and afterward all the Rajahs and Ranees and their attendants returned to their own kingdoms, and Logedas Rajah and Seventee Bai, and his brothers and their six wives went back with Siu Rajah to their own country; Parbuttee Bai was married to a neighboring Rajah, and they all lived happily forever after.

X

TRUTH'S TRIUMPH

SEVERAL hundred years ago there was a certain Rajah who had twelve wives, but no children, and though he caused many prayers to be said, and presents made in temples far and near, never a son nor a daughter had he. Now this Rajah had a Wuzeer who was a very, very wise old man, and it came to pass that one day, when he was travelling in a distant part of his kingdom, accompanied by this Wuzeer and the rest of his court, he came upon a large garden, in walking round which he was particularly struck by a little tree which grew there. It was a bringal tree, not above two feet in height. It had no leaves, but on it grew a hundred and one bringals. The Rajah stopped to count them, and then turning to the Wuzeer in great astonishment, said, "It is to me a most unaccountable thing, that this little tree should have no leaves, but a hundred and one bringals growing on it. You are a wise man—can you guess what this means?" The Wuzeer replied, "I can interpret this marvel to you, but if I do, you will most likely not believe me, promise, therefore, that if I tell you, you will not cause me to be killed for

having told (as you imagine) a lie." The Rajah promised and the Wuzeer continued :

"The meaning of this little bringal tree, with the hundred and one bringals growing on it, is this. Whoever marries the daughter of the Malee in charge of this garden will have a hundred and one children—a hundred sons and one daughter." The Rajah said, "Where is the maiden to be seen?" The Wuzeer answered, "When a number of great people like you and all your court come into a little village like this, the poor people, and especially the children, are frightened and run away and hide themselves; therefore, as long as it is known that you, their Rajah, are still here, you cannot hope to see her. But send away your attendants, and let it be told that you, too, have left the place. Then if you come every day to this garden, you will probably some morning meet the pretty Guzra Bai,—for that is the name of the maiden."

The Rajah was pleased with the advice, and determined to follow it. His attendants were sent away, and it was said he, too, had gone; but instead he stayed in the village, and came each day to the Malee's garden. There, at last, he chanced to see the maiden gathering flowers, and he was at once charmed with her grace and beauty. It seemed to him, indeed, that he had never seen even a Rajah's daughter who was half so lovely.

He went forward to speak to her, but seeing he was a stranger, she was frightened and ran away. He followed her to her home ; but when he came to the Malee's house, he found the door shut, and fastened on the inside, so he called out, "Let me in, good Malee; I am the Rajah, and I wish to marry your daughter." The Malee only laughed, and answered, "A pretty tale to tell, indeed. You a Rajah! why the Rajah is miles away. You had better go home, my good fellow, for there's no welcome for you here." But the Rajah continued calling till the Malee opened the door. Great was his surprise at seeing it was truly no other than the Rajah, and he asked what he could do for him.

The Rajah said, "I wish to marry your beautiful daughter, Guzra Bai." "No, no," said the Malee, "that joke won't do. You may think you are a great Rajah and I only a poor Malee, but I tell you that makes no difference at all to me. Though you were king of all the earth, I would not allow you to come here chattering to my girl, and then go away and leave her to break her heart about you."

"In truth, good man, you do me wrong," answered the Rajah humbly: "I mean what I say; I wish to marry your daughter."

"Do not think," said the Malee, "that you can make a fool of me. If you really want to marry my

daughter, you will have to be married to her here in her father's house, and with our old friends and acquaintances as guests;—people we knew long before we even so much as saw you."

The Rajah was not angry at the old man's frankness, instead he was amused, and willingly agreed to do as the Malee wished. So Guzra Bai was married in village fashion to the great Rajah, and then he took her home with him to the palace.

Now the other twelve Ranees, who were all Kings' daughters, were very angry when they found the Malee's daughter was to live there in the palace as one of themselves. They thought it was an insult to them, and determined to make her suffer for it, and they found so many ways of teasing and tormenting her that she became very unhappy.

The Rajah learned of this, but did not know how to prevent it. At last, however, he built a little house for Guzra Bai, outside the palace, where she could live alone and in peace, and then she was very happy again.

But a time came when the Rajah found it necessary to make a far journey to a distant part of his kingdom. Just before leaving he came to Guzra Bai, and gave her a little golden bell, saying, "If, while I am away you are in any trouble, or if any one is unkind to you, ring this little bell, and wher-

ever I am, I shall hear it, and instantly return to your side."

No sooner had the Rajah gone, than Guzra Bai thought she would try the power of the bell. So she rang it. The Rajah instantly appeared. "What do you want?" he asked. "Oh, nothing," she replied. "I was foolish. I could hardly believe what you told me, and I thought I would prove it." "Now you will believe, I hope," he said, and went away. A second time she rang the bell. Again the Rajah returned. "Oh, pardon me, husband," she said; "it was wrong of me not to trust you, but I hardly thought you could return again from so far." "Never mind," he said, "only do not ring it again unless you really need me." And again he went away. A third time she rang the golden bell. "Why do you ring again, Guzra Bai?" asked the Rajah sternly, as for the third time he returned. "I do not know indeed, and indeed I beg your pardon," she said. "I know not why, but I felt so frightened." "Have any of the Ranees been unkind to you?" he asked. "No, not one of them," she answered. "In fact, I have not seen any of them."

"You are a silly child," said the Rajah tenderly. "It is very necessary that I should make this journey, but I will return as soon as I can, and meanwhile you must be brave and patient." Then for the fourth time he disappeared.

Now not long after this, a wonderful thing happened, for Guzra Bai had a hundred and one children,—a hundred boys, and one little girl. When the Ranees learned of this, they said to each other, “Guzra Bai, the Malee’s daughter, will now be greater than any of us because she has given to the Rajah a hundred sons. Let us get rid of these children in some way, and then when the Rajah comes we will persuade him this village girl is a wicked witch, and has destroyed her children. Then he will not care what becomes of her, and we can treat her as we choose.”

All twelve of the wicked Ranees agreed in this, and at once set out for Guzra Bai’s house. When Guzra Bai saw them coming she was very much afraid and she seized her little golden bell, and rang and rang it. But she had now called the Rajah back so often for no reason whatever, except her fancies, that this time he did not believe she really needed him any more than she had before. So he did not come, and she was left to the mercy of her enemies.

Now the nurse who had charge of the hundred and one babies was an old servant of the twelve Ranees, and moreover a very wicked woman, able and willing to do whatever her twelve wicked old mistresses ordered. So when they said to her, “Can you get rid of these children in any way?” she

answered, "Nothing is easier; I will throw them out upon the dust-heap behind the palace, and they will soon perish. "So be it," said the Ranees. Then the nurse took the hundred and one little innocent children—the hundred little boys and the one little girl—and threw them out on the dust-heap behind the palace, and close to some large rat holes; and after that, she and the twelve Ranees placed a very large stone in each of the babies' cradles, and said to Guzra Bai, "Oh you wicked woman! See, your children have all turned into stones. See, these are your pretty babies." And with that they tumbled the hundred and one stones down in a great heap on the floor. Then Guzra Bai began to cry for she knew it was not true, but what could she do when there were twelve Ranees against her, and the old nurse as well.

Now, no sooner had the Rajah returned than the twelve Ranees hastened to him before he had even seen Guzra Bai, and told him the girl he had brought from the village was nothing but a wicked witch. The nurse upheld them in their story and told him of the hundred and one children she had taken charge of, and that Guzra Bai had presently turned them all into stones. Then the Rajah believed the nurse and the twelve Ranees rather than Guzra Bai, and ordered her to be imprisoned for life.

Meanwhile, a great rat, of the kind called Bandicotes, had heard the cries of the children, and taking pity on them, she dragged them all, one by one, into her hole where they would be safe. She then called together the other Bandicotes from far and near, and told them what she had done, and begged them to help her find food for the children, so as to keep them alive. The other Bandicotes were quite willing to do this, and every day a hundred and one of them would come, each bringing a little bit of food which they would give to the children ; and so the children, day by day, grew and became stronger and stronger, until they were able to run about. They used to play of a morning at the mouth of the Bandicote's hole, but every night they ran inside to sleep. But one fine day who should come by but the wicked old nurse. Fortunately, all the boys were in the hole, and the little girl, who was playing outside, on seeing her ran in too, but the nurse had seen her run. She immediately went to the twelve Ranees, and told them of this, saying, "I cannot help thinking that some of those children may still be alive, and hidden down in the rat holes. You had better send men to dig out the holes and see what is there."

"We dare not do that," said the Ranees, "for fear the Rajah might hear of it, but we will have the holes filled in, and the place covered over." This plan was

presently carried out, but the good old Bandicote had happened to be in the palace that day in search of food, and had heard all the Ranees said. Immediately she ran home, and took all the children from her hole to a large well some distance away. There she hid them in the hollows behind the steps leading down to the well, laying one child under each step.

They would now have been quite safe, but a Dhobee happened to go down to the well that day to wash some clothes, taking with him his little girl. While the father was drawing up water, the child amused herself by running up and down the steps of the well. Now each time her weight pressed down a step it gave the child hidden underneath a little squeeze. All the hundred boys bore this without uttering a sound; but when the Dhobee's child trod on the step under which the little girl was hidden, she cried out, "How can you be so cruel to me, trampling on me in this way? Have pity on me, for I am a little girl as well as you."

When the child heard these words, she ran in great alarm to her father, saying, "Father, I don't know what's the matter, but something alive is certainly under those steps. I heard it speak; but whether it is a Rakshas or an angel or a human being, I cannot tell." Then the Dhobee went to the twelve Ranees to tell them the wonderful news about the voice in the

well ; and they said to each other, “ Maybe it’s some of Guzra Bai’s children ; let us send and have this inquired into.” So they sent people to pull down the well and see if some evil spirits were there.

Now close to the well was a little temple dedicated to Gunputti, and in it was a small shrine with a little clay image of the god. So when the laborers went to pull down the well, and the children found what was being done, they called out for help and protection to Gunputti. The god took pity on them and changed them into trees growing by his temple—a hundred little mango trees all round in a circle (and those were the hundred little boys) and a little rose bush in the middle, covered with red and white roses (and this was the little girl).

The laborers who had pulled down the well found nothing there but a poor old Bandicote, which they killed. Then, by order of the twelve wicked Ranees, they destroyed the little temple also. But they found no children there either. However, the Dhobee’s mischievous little daughter had gone with her father to watch the work of the laborers, and presently looking about her, she said, “ Father do look at all those funny little trees ; I never noticed them here before.” And being very inquisitive, she went to have a nearer look at them. There in a circle grew the hundred little mango trees, and in the

centre of all, the little rose bush bearing the red and white roses.

The girl rushed by the mango trees, who uttered no words, and running up to the rose bush, began gathering some of the flowers. At this the rose bush trembled very much, and sighed and said, "I am a little girl as well as you; how can you be so cruel? You are breaking all my ribs." Then the child ran back to her father and said, "Come and listen to what the rose bush says." And the father repeated the news to the twelve Ranees, who ordered that a great fire should be made, and the hundred and one little trees burnt in it, root and branch, till not a stick remained.

The fire was made, and the hundred and one little trees were dug up and just going to be put into it, when Gunputti, taking pity on them, caused a tremendous storm to come on, which put out the fire and flooded the country and swept the hundred and one trees into the river, where they were carried down a long, long way by the torrent until at last they drifted ashore, and the children were restored to their own shapes; but they were in the midst of a wild jungle, very far from any human habitation.

Here they lived for ten years, happy in their mutual love and affection. Generally every day fifty of the boys would go out to collect roots and berries for

food, leaving fifty at home to take care of their little sister, but sometimes they put her in some safe place, and all would go out together for the day ; nor were they ever harmed on these excursions, by panthers, lions, snakes or other dangerous creatures. On one of the times when the brothers had all gone out together, they wandered further into the jungle than ever before, and in their wanderings they came to the hut of a savage Rakshas. She had been living there alone in the jungle, disguised as an old woman, for many years, and on seeing the brothers she was filled with rage at the thought that others had also come there to live. Immediately she used her magic power in such a way that the one hundred brothers lost their human shapes, and were turned into one hundred crows.

Meanwhile, the little sister was waiting at home for their return. The whole day passed, and then, just as night was coming on, she heard a loud whirring of wings in the air, and a hundred crows flew round her and lighted on the ground or in the trees and bushes. Each held in its beak some berry fruit or root, which it offered to her, and the little sister soon guessed, only too truly, that some evil power had changed her brothers into this shape.

Then she mourned and wept bitterly, but not all her tears could give them back their human shape.



SHE HEARD A LOUD WHIRRING OF WINGS AND A HUNDRED CROWS FLEW ROUND HER

So time passed by, and every morning the crows flew away to collect food for their sister and for themselves, and every evening they returned to roost in the branches of the high tree where she sat the live-long day, waiting for them, and often weeping for their sad fate.

At last so many bitter tears had she shed that they made a little stream which flowed from the foot of the tree right down through the jungle.

Now it chanced that one day a young Rajah from a neighboring country came to this jungle to hunt, but he was not very successful. Moreover he lost both his way and his companions, and toward evening he threw himself down beside a trickling stream, that seemed to flow out from among the roots of an immensely tall tree. Some sound made him look up, and to his amazement he saw, seated among the branches overhead, a most beautiful maiden, with a hundred crows about her.

Quick as thought the young Rajah climbed the tree, and brought the sister gently down. He seated her on the grass, saying, "Tell me, pretty lady who you are, and how you happen to be living here alone in this dreary place?" Then she told him how she was the daughter of a Rajah, and how she had been thrown on an ash-heap to perish, and had been saved by an old Bandicote. All her adventures she told

him, only she did not tell him of her one hundred brothers, and that they were the hundred crows among the branches overhead.

Then the Rajah loved her because of her beauty and her sorrows, and he said to her, "Do not cry any more, for you shall come home with me and be my Ranees, and my father and mother shall be your father and mother."

To this the Princess agreed, but she said, "I must bring the hundred crows with me, for I love them dearly, and without them I will go nowhere." The Rajah answered, "You may bring all the animals in the jungle with you if you like, so you will only come."

So he took her home to his father's house, and the old Rajah and Ranees wondered much when they saw the jungle lady, because of her great beauty, her modest ways and her queenly grace. Then the young Rajah told them her story, and asked their leave to marry her; and because her loving goodness had won all hearts, they gave their consent as joyfully as if she had been the daughter of the greatest Rajah in the world and had brought with her a splendid dower; and they called her Draupadi Bai.

Draupadi had some beautiful trees planted in front of her palace and in there the crows, her brothers, used to live, and daily with her own hands

she boiled a quantity of rice, which she would scatter for them to eat as they flocked around her. Now some time after this, Draupadi Bai had a son, who was called Ramchundra; he grew to be a handsome and noble boy, and as soon as he was old enough he was sent each day to school; always when he came home he found his mother watching and waiting for him. But once he returned earlier than usual, and coming into the garden in front of the palace he found his mother seated under the trees with the crows gathered about her, and she was weeping over them and caressing them as she wept.

As soon as Ramchundra appeared, however, the crows flew away. The boy threw himself down beside Draupadi, and said to her, "Mother, what is the meaning of this. Why were you weeping over the crows, and why are you so often sad?"

At first his mother would not tell him, but he still begged and entreated her, until Draupadi, who could refuse him nothing, told him that the crows were her brothers, and related to him the whole of their history, and her own as well. Ramchundra listened carefully until the end. Then he sprang to his feet and cried, "From which direction did my uncles return to you after they had been turned into crows?"

The mother replied, "From the direction of the

setting sun, for I remember it shone in my eyes as I looked up and saw them coming. But why do you ask?"

"Because," cried Ramchundra, "I am going to seek out that wicked Rakshas, or whoever it was that bewitched them; and learn how they may be freed from the enchantment and brought back to their proper forms."

But his mother cried, "No, no; I cannot let you go. I have lost my father and mother and my hundred brothers, and if I should lose you, too, I would die of sorrow."

To this Ramchundra replied, "Have no fear for me. I will be wary and careful, no harm will come to me." He then went to his father and said to him, "My father, I am now of an age to go out into the world, and to learn something of other lands. I beg of you to give me permission to set out."

The Rajah answered, "You shall go; only tell me how many attendants you want, and how many horses and elephants."

"I will have only one horse, and a groom to take care of it," replied Ramchundra. "Very well; it shall be as you wish," said his father, and that very day Ramchundra set out with his horse and his one attendant for the jungle. As soon as he reached its borders, however, he alighted and bade the man take

the horse back to the palace, and he himself went on into the jungle on foot.

For some time he journeyed on, always toward the west, until at last he came to a hut, and looking in he saw an ugly old woman lying there asleep. She had long claws for fingers, and her hair hung down all about her in a thick black tangle. From her appearance he could tell that she was a Rakshas, and he felt sure that she was the one who had bewitched his uncles.

Very quietly, and without awakening her, Ramchundra entered the hut, and sitting down beside her, began to smooth her hair. Some time afterward she woke, and seeing him she said, "Do not be afraid, my son. I am only a poor old woman who could not possibly hurt you. Stay here with me and I will give you food and shelter." This she said not out of any kindness toward the prince, but because she wished to keep him for a servant. Ramchundra, himself, desired nothing more than to remain there until he learned the secret of the Rakshas' enchantments, so he willingly agreed to stay, and became her servant, and tried in every way to please her. Then one day he said to her, "Good mother, I see there are always a number of little jars of water standing about the house. What is the use of them?"

The Rakshas replied, "The water in those jars is of great value, for if it is sprinkled on people who

have been enchanted, they at once resume their natural shapes." "And is that old staff in the corner also of use?" he asked. "Yes, it also has magic powers," the Rakshas answered "With it you can conjure up, if you wish, a mountain a forest, or a river, by merely striking it on the ground, and speaking your wish aloud."

Another day Ramchundra said to her, "Good mother, your hair is dreadfully tangled; pray let me comb it." "Do not dare to do such a thing," cried the Rakshas. "It would be terribly dangerous for both of us." "How is that?" asked Ramchundra. The Rakshas answered, "If even a single one of my hairs were flung into the jungle it would instantly set the whole place on fire."

Ramchundra had now learned all that he needed to know, and one very hot day, not long afterward, he said to the Rakshas, "I see that you are very tired. Sit down and I will smooth your hair, and that will rest you, and put you to sleep." To this the Rakshas consented; she lay down and Ramchundra began to rub her head. Very soon she fell into a deep sleep. At once, very softly, and without awakening her, the young Rajah pulled out one of her hairs. He then arose, and taking her staff in one hand, and a jar of water in the other, he set out through the jungle in the direction of the palace.

Not long afterward the Rakshas awoke and looked about her. Nowhere could she see Ramchundra; moreover the staff and one of the jars of water were gone, so at once she guessed that he had taken them and gone, and she set off in pursuit of him. She went so fast that soon she came within sight of him, but Ramchundra heard her coming, and turning he struck his staff upon the ground and cried, "Let a mountain rise up between us."

At once a mountain rose up between him and the Rakshas, but without stopping she rushed on so fast that she soon reached the other side of it.

Ramchundra looked back and saw her coming. Turning, he again struck the ground with his staff. "May a river flow between us," he cried. At once a river flowed down through the jungle between him and the Rakshas, but the Rakshas stooped and drank it dry, and came on after him. Then for the third time the young Rajah turned and struck the ground with his staff. "May a forest spring up between us," he cried. Immediately a forest rose behind him, but the Rakshas soon made her way through it, brushing the trees this way and that as though they had been so many twigs. And now she was close, close upon the Prince. But already Ramchundra had reached the edge of the jungle, and as he stepped out from it he turned and cast the Rakshas' hair behind.

In an instant the whole jungle was in a blaze, and the wicked Rakshas was consumed in the flames.

Ramchundra now journeyed on in safety, and it was not long before he reached his father's palace.

Draupadi Bai was overjoyed to see her son again, and he led her out into the garden, and scattered the magic water on the hundred black crows which had seen him coming and had flown down from the trees to meet him. Instantly they recovered their human forms, and stood up one hundred fine, handsome young men.

Then there was rejoicing throughout the country, because the Ranees' brothers had been freed from their enchantment, and the Rajah sent out into all neighboring lands to invite the Rajahs and Ranees to a great feast in honor of his brothers-in-law.

Among others who came to the feast was Draupadi's Bai's father, and he brought with him the twelve wicked Ranees who had treated Guzra Bai so cruelly.

Then, before everyone, the Rajah who was Draupadi Bai's husband, arose and said to her father, "Noble sir, why have you not brought your wife, Guzra Bai, with you? We had hoped to see her too." Draupadi Bai's father was amazed that this strange Rajah should know anything of Guzra Bai, but he made answer, "Guzra Bai is a wicked woman. She

did an evil and shameful act, for which she is even now in prison. For this reason I did not bring her."

Draupadi Bai's husband said, "Your wife, Guzra Bai, is innocent, and we insist that you shall send for her, otherwise, your twelve Ranees who are here with you shall be cast into prison, and you yourself shall be driven out shamefully from our kingdom."

Draupadi Bai's father was still more amazed at hearing this, and he was also afraid, for Draupadi Bai's husband was a very powerful Rajah, and a dangerous man to have for an enemy. So he said, "I am quite willing to send for Guzra Bai, if you desire it. It makes no difference to me." Attendants were at once sent on swift horses for Guzra Bai, and it was not long before they returned bringing her with them. When she arrived her hundred sons, and her daughter Draupadi Bai, and Draupadi Bai's husband and the young Ramchundra all went out to the gate to meet her, and brought her to the palace with the greatest honor. Then standing there around her, they related to everyone present the story of her life. First, to the wonder of all, they told that the beautiful Draupadi Bai, and the hundred fine young men were all her children. They next told how these hundred and one children had been stolen away from her while they were infants, and stones had been put in their places, and of how Guzra Bai's husband

had been deceived by the stories the twelve wicked Ranees had told about her.

Guzra Bai's husband listened with the greatest wonder, and after he had heard all there was to tell, he embraced Guzra Bai tenderly, begging her, with tears, to forgive him. This she did, and they were very happy together.

The twelve wicked Ranees were thrown into prison where they were very miserable for many years, but Guzra and her husband, and their one hundred sons returned to their own kingdom rejoicing. Draupadi Bai and her husband lived happily to the end of their lives, when Ramchundra became Rajah in his father's place and was much beloved by his people.

So truth triumphed in the end. Only the wicked nurse was never punished, and when she died it is said she had as big a funeral pile as though she had been a good Hindoo and had never done harm to anyone, whereas she had really been almost as wicked as the wicked Ranees themselves.

XI

THE VALIANT CHATTEE-MAKER

ONCE upon a time, when a great storm of thunder and lightning and wind and rain was going on, a Tiger crept close to the wall of an old woman's house for shelter. This old woman was very poor, and her hut was but a tumble-down place, and the roof was broken so that the rain came drip, drip, dripping into the room in more places than one. This troubled the old woman very much, and she went running from side to side, dragging first one thing and then another from under the leaky places in the room. All the while she kept talking aloud to herself. "Oh dear! Oh dear! how terrible this is. I am sure the roof will come down. If an elephant or a lion or a tiger were to walk into the house it wouldn't frighten me half as much as this continual dripping."

The Tiger, which was crouching down outside heard all she said, and thought to itself, "This old woman says a lion or an elephant or a tiger wouldn't frighten her half as much as this *continual dripping*. What can this continual dripping be! It must be something very dreadful to frighten her so much."

Immediately afterward she began dragging the

things about the room again, and it thought, "That is a terrible noise. It must be the 'continual dripping' that is making it."

Soon after this, and just as the storm was clearing away, a Chattee-maker came down the road looking for his donkey, which had strayed away. On his way he had stopped in at the house of a friend, and there he had eaten and drunk a great deal more than was good for him, and hardly knew what he was about. Now seeing some big animal crouching close to the old woman's wall, he thought it was his donkey, and running over to it, he caught hold of the Tiger's ear, and began beating and kicking and abusing it with all his might.

"You wretched creature!" he cried. "Is this the way you serve me, making me come out to look for you at night, and in a pouring rain. Get up, and be quick about it, or I will break every bone in your body." So he went on scolding and thumping the Tiger with his utmost power, for he had worked himself up into a terrible rage. The Tiger did not know what to make of it all, but he began to feel quite frightened, and said to himself, "Why, this must be the 'continual dripping'; no wonder the old woman said she was more afraid of it than of an elephant, a lion, or a tiger, for it gives most dreadfully hard blows."



THE CHATTEE-MAKER. HAVING MADE THE TIGER GET UP, FORCED IT TO CARRY HIM HOME

The Chattee-maker, having made the Tiger get up, got on its back and forced it to carry him home, kicking and beating it the whole way, for all this time he fancied he was on his donkey; and then he tied its fore feet and its head firmly together, and fastened it to a post in front of his house, and when he had done this he went to bed.

Next morning, when the Chattee-maker's wife got up and looked out of the window, what did she see but a great big tiger tied up in front of their house, to the post to which they usually fastened the donkey: she was very surprised, and running to her husband, awoke him, saying, "Do you know what animal you fetched home last night?" "Yes, the donkey to be sure," he answered. "Come and see," said she, and she showed him the great Tiger tied to the post. The Chattee-maker at this was no less astonished than his wife, and felt himself all over to find if the Tiger had not wounded him. But, no: there he was safe and sound, and there was the Tiger tied to the post, just as he had fastened it up the night before.

News of the Chattee-maker's exploits soon spread through the village, and all the people came to see him and hear him tell how he had caught the Tiger and tied it to the post; and this they thought so wonderful that they sent a deputation to the Rajah,

with a letter to tell him how a man of their village had, alone and unarmed, caught a great tiger and tied it to a post.

When the Rajah read the letter he also was much surprised, and determined to go in person and see this astonishing sight. So he sent for his horses and carriages, his lords and attendants, and they all set off together to look at the Chattee-maker and the Tiger he had caught.

Now the Tiger was a very large one, and had long been the terror of all the country round, which made the whole matter still more wonderful. All this was explained to the Rajah, and as he heard it he wondered still more over the bravery of the Chattee-maker, and determined to reward him, and do him every possible honor. So he gave him houses and lands, and enough money to fill a well, and made him a great lord, and put him in command of ten thousand horsemen.

Not long after this an enemy declared war against the Rajah, and came marching against him at the head of a great army.

The Rajah sent in haste for all his generals, and asked each one of them in turn to take command of his army. But one after another said he would not dare to undertake such a thing. The country was not prepared for war, and if the army went forth it

would most certainly be defeated. It was better to try to make peace with the enemy, even if the whole country must be given over to him.

The Rajah was in despair. He did not know what to do. Then some of his people said to him, "You have lately given the command of ten thousand horsemen to the valiant Chattee-maker. Such a man as that, who can catch a tiger, and tie him to a post, would not be afraid of anything. Why do you not make him Commander-in-Chief of the army?"

The Rajah was pleased with the idea, and at once sent for the Chattee-maker. "I have decided," said he, "to put you in command of the whole army. With such a leader as you it will go anywhere or do anything, and the enemy will soon be driven out."

The Chattee-maker was very much troubled when he heard this, but he dared not show it. "So be it," he said. "But before I set out with the army I would like to go alone by myself, to spy upon the enemy, and find how strong he is."

To this the Rajah agreed, and the Chattee-maker returned home to his wife. "I have been made Commander-in-Chief of the army," he said. "This is a very difficult position for I will have to ride at the head of it. As you know I have never ridden anything but a donkey, and if I were mounted on a horse I am very sure I would soon fall off. But I have

gained a little time, for the Rajah has agreed to let me first go alone to spy upon the enemy. Do you go out and find for me, as soon as possible, a quiet pony, that you think I can ride, and I will then set out."

But before this could be done the Rajah sent to the Chattee-maker a most magnificent horse, very swift and strong, which he begged him to ride when he went to see the enemy's camp.

The Chattee-maker was frightened almost out of his life when he saw the horse, it was so big and spirited, and he felt sure that even if he ever got on it, he should very soon tumble off; however, he did not dare refuse it, for fear of offending the Rajah. So he sent back to him a message of thanks, and said to his wife, "I cannot go on the pony, now that the Rajah has sent me this fine horse; but how am I ever to ride it?" "Oh, don't be frightened," she answered; "you've only got to get upon it, and I will tie you firmly on, so that you cannot tumble off, and if you start at night, no one will see that you are tied on." "Very well," he said. So that night his wife brought the horse that the Rajah had sent him to the door. "Indeed," said the Chattee-maker, "I can never get into that saddle, it is so high up." "You must jump," said his wife. So he tried several times to jump up on it, but each time he tumbled back again. "I always forget when I am jumping,"

said he, "which way I ought to turn." "Your face must be toward the horse's head," she answered. "To be sure, of course," he cried, and giving one great jump he jumped into the saddle, but with his face toward the horse's tail. "This won't do at all," said his wife as she helped him down again; try getting on without jumping." "I never can remember," he continued, "when I have got my left foot in the stirrup, what to do with my right foot or where to put it." "That must go in the other stirrup," she answered, "let me help you." So, after many trials, in which he tumbled down very often, for the horse was fresh and did not like standing still, the Chattee-maker got into the saddle; but no sooner had he got there than he cried, "Oh, wife, wife! tie me very firmly as quickly as possible, for I know I shall fall off if you don't." Then she fetched some strong rope and tied his feet firmly into the stirrups, and fastened one stirrup to the other, and put another rope round his waist and another round his neck, and fastened them to the horse's body and neck and tail.

When the horse felt all these ropes about him he could not imagine what queer creature had got upon his back, and he began rearing and kicking and prancing, and at last set off full gallop, as fast as he could tear, right across country. "Wife, wife!" cried the Chattee-maker, "you forgot to tie my

hands." "Never mind," said she; "hold on by the mane." So he caught hold of the horse's mane as firmly as he could. Then away went horse, away went Chattee-maker—away, away, away, over hedges, over ditches, over rivers, over plains—like a flash of lightning—now this way, now that—on, on, on, gallop, gallop, gallop—until they came in sight of the enemy's camp.

The Chattee-maker did not like his ride at all, and when he saw where it was leading him he liked it still less, for he thought the enemy would catch him and very likely kill him. So he determined to make one desperate effort to be free, and stretching out his hand as the horse shot past a young banyan tree, seized hold of it with all his might, hoping that the ropes might break and leave him hanging there. But the horse was going at full speed, and the ground around the banyan tree was soft, so that when the Chattee-maker caught hold of it and gave it such a violent jerk, it came up by the roots, and he was still carried on as fast as before, but now with a tree in his hands.

The soldiers in the enemy's camp heard a great noise, and ran out to look, and when they saw the Chattee-maker riding toward them at full speed, and holding the tree, they thought he was the first of the army they had heard was coming against them, and

that the others must be close behind. "Look!" "Look!" they cried. "This man is terrible. See how he rides at full speed tearing up trees in his rage. If the others are such as he we will all soon be dead men." Then running to their Rajah they cried, "Our enemies are coming! They are all giants, riding mighty horses, and tearing up trees along the way." (For their fear was so great they believed they had seen all this.) "We can fight against men," they cried, "but not against such monsters as these."

By this time the Chattee-maker had come almost to the camp. "They are here! They are here!" shouted the soldiers. "Let us fly for our lives!" And the whole terrified army fled from the camp, the few who had seen no reason for fear going because the others did. Their Rajah was just as much frightened as the others, and fled with them, but first he managed to write a letter to the Rajah he had meant to attack, asking that there might be peace between them. Scarcely had all the people fled from the camp when the horse on which the Chattee-maker was came galloping into it, and on his back rode the Chattee-maker, almost dead from fatigue, with the banyan tree in his hand: just as he reached the camp the ropes by which he was tied broke, and he fell to the ground. The horse stood still, too tired with his long run to go farther. On recovering his

senses, the Chattee-maker found, to his surprise, that the whole camp, full of rich arms, clothes and trappings, was entirely deserted. In the principal tent, moreover, he found the letter the enemy's Rajah had written, suing for peace.

So he took the letter, and returned home with it as fast as he could, leading his horse all the way, for he was afraid to mount it again. It did not take him long to reach his house by the direct road, for in riding he had gone by a more roundabout way than was necessary, and he got there just at nightfall. His wife ran out to meet him, overjoyed at his speedy return.

As soon as he saw her, he said, "Ah, wife, since I saw you last I've been all around the world, and had many wonderful and terrible adventures. But never mind that now: send this letter quickly to the Rajah by a messenger, and send the horse also that he sent for me to ride. He will then see, by the horse looking so tired, what a long ride I've had; and if he is sent on before hand, I shall not be obliged to ride him up to the palace door to-morrow morning, as I otherwise should, and that would be very tiresome, for most likely I should tumble off." So his wife sent the horse and the letter to the Rajah, and a message that her husband would be at the palace early next morning, as it was then late at night. And next day

he went down there, as he had said he would ; and when the people saw him coming, they said, " What a modest man this is ; as modest as he is brave, for after having put our enemies to flight, he walks quite simply to the door, instead of riding here in state, as another man would." For they did not know that the Chattee-maker was afraid to ride.

The Rajah came to the palace door to meet him, and paid him all possible honor. Terms of peace were agreed upon between the two countries, and the Chattee-maker was rewarded for all he had done by being given twice as much rank and wealth as he had before, and he lived very happily all the rest of his life.

XII

PANCH-PHUL RANEE

A CERTAIN Rajah had two wives and while he loved the second very dearly, he did not love the first at all. The first Ranee had a son, but, because he was not the child of the second Ranee, his father took a great dislike to him and treated him so harshly that the poor boy was very unhappy.

One day he said to his mother, "Mother, my father does not care for me, and my presence is only a vexation to him. I should be happier anywhere than here ; let me go and seek my fortune in other lands."

So the Ranee asked her husband if he would allow their son to travel. He said, "The boy is free to go, but I don't see how he is to live in any other part of the world, for he is too stupid to earn his living, and I will give him no money to waste on useless pleasures." Then the Ranee told her son that he had his father's permission to travel, and said to him, "You are going out into the world now to try your luck ; take with you the food and clothes I have provided for your journey." And she gave him a bundle of clothes and several small loaves, and in each loaf she placed a gold mohur,* that on opening

* A piece of money worth a little over \$7.00.

it, he might find that he had money as well as food; then he started on his journey.

When the young Rajah had travelled a long way and had left his father's kingdom far behind, he one day came to the outskirts of a great city and there, instead of taking the position due to his rank, and sending to inform the Rajah of his arrival, he went to a poor carpenter's house, and begged of him a lodging for the night. The Carpenter was busy making wooden clogs at the door of his house, but he looked up and nodded, saying, "Young man, you are welcome to any help a stranger may need and we can give. If you are in want of food, you will find my wife in the house; she will be happy to cook for you." The Rajah went inside and said to the Carpenter's wife, "I am a stranger, and have travelled a long way; I am both tired and hungry; cook me some dinner as fast as you can, and I will pay you for your trouble." She answered, "I would willingly cook you some dinner at once, but I have no wood to light the fire and the jungle is some way off." "It matters not," said the young Rajah, "this will do to light the fire, and I'll make the loss good to your husband," and taking a pair of new clogs which the Carpenter had just made, he broke them up and lighted the fire with them.

Next morning he went into the jungle, cut wood,

and, having made a pair of new clogs—better than those with which he had lighted the fire the evening before—he placed them with the rest of the goods for sale in the Carpenter’s shop. Shortly afterward, one of the servants of the Rajah of that country came to buy a pair of clogs for his master, and seeing these new ones, said to the Carpenter, “Why, man, these clogs are better than all the rest put together. I will take none other to the Rajah. I wish you would always make such clogs as these.” And throwing down ten gold mohurs on the floor of the hut, he took up the clogs and went away.

The Carpenter was much surprised at the whole business. In the first place, he usually received only two or three rupees for each pair of clogs; and, in the second, he knew that these which the Rajah’s servant had judged to be worth ten gold mohurs had not been made by him; and how they had come there he could not think, for he felt certain they were not with the rest of the clogs the night before. He thought and thought, but the more he thought about the matter, the more puzzled he got, and he went to talk about it to his wife. Then she said, “Those must have been the clogs the stranger made!” And she told her husband how he had lighted the fire the night before with two of the clogs which were for sale, and had afterward fetched

wood from the jungle and made another pair to replace them.

The Carpenter at this news was more astonished than ever, and he thought to himself, "This stranger seems a quiet, peaceable sort of a man. It would be a good thing if he would stay here altogether," and going out to where the young Rajah was sitting by the door, he asked whether he would be willing to live there, and be to him as a son. But he had no idea, when he did this, that the stranger was a Prince.

The young Rajah thought to himself, "There are worse ways of living than this," and he agreed to stay there and make clogs for the Carpenter. Now this young Rajah was clever at making all sorts of things in wood. When he had made all the clogs that were needed for the day, he would amuse himself by making toys, and in this way he made a thousand wooden parrots. They were as like real parrots as possible, only larger. They each had two wings, two legs, two eyes, and a curved beak. And when the Rajah had finished them all, he painted and varnished them and put them outside the house to dry.

Night came on, and with it came Parbuttee and Mahdeo,* flying round the world to see the different races of men. Amongst the many places they visited was the city where the Carpenter lived, and in the

*A Hindoo god and goddess.

garden in front of the house they saw the thousand wooden parrots which the Rajah had made and painted and varnished, all placed out to dry. Then Parbuttee turned to Mahdeo, and said, "These parrots are very well made—they need nothing but life. Why should not we give them life?" Mahdeo answered, "What would be the use of that? It would be a strange trick, indeed!" "Oh," said Parbuttee, "I only meant you to do it as an amusement. It would be so funny to see the wooden parrots flying about! But do not do it if you don't like." "You would like it then?" answered Mahdeo. "Very well, I will do it." And he endowed the thousand parrots with life.

Parbuttee and Mahdeo then flew away.

Next morning the Rajah got up early to see if the varnish he had put on the wooden parrots was dry; but no sooner did he open the door than—marvel of marvels!—the thousand wooden parrots all came walking into the house, flapping their wings and chattering to each other.

Hearing the noise, the Carpenter and the Carpenter's wife came running out to see what was the matter, and were not less astonished than the Rajah himself at the miracle which had taken place. Then the Carpenter's wife turned to the Rajah and said, "It is all very well that you should have made these

wooden parrots ; but I don't know where we are to find food for them ! Great, strong parrots like these will eat not less than a pound of rice apiece every day. My husband and I cannot afford to buy as much as that for them in this poor house. If you wish to keep them, you must live elsewhere for we cannot provide for you all."

"Very well," said the Rajah, "I will give you no reason to say I have ruined you ; from henceforth I will have a house of my own." So he went to live in a house of his own and he took the thousand parrots with him. But he soon found that the parrots, instead of being an expense, were the means of adding to his fortune ; for they flew away every morning early to get food, and spent the whole day out in the fields ; and every evening, when they returned home, each parrot brought in his beak a stalk of corn or rice, or whatever it had found that was good to eat, so that their master was regularly supplied with more food than enough ; and soon, with selling what he did not require and working at his trade, he became quite a rich carpenter.

After he had been living in this way very happily for some time, one night, when he fell asleep, he dreamed a wonderful dream, and this was the dream :

He dreamed that very, very far away beyond the Red Sea and seven other seas there was a beautiful

kingdom and that it belonged to a Rajah and Ranee who had one lovely daughter, named Panch-Phul Ranee (the Five Flower Queen); that in her honor the whole kingdom was called Panch-Phul Ranee's country; and he dreamed that this Princess lived in the centre of her father's kingdom in a little house around which were seven wide ditches and seven great hedges made of spears; and that she was called Panch-Phul Ranee because she was so light and delicate that she weighed no more than five white lotus flowers! Moreover, he dreamed that this Princess had vowed to marry no one who could not cross the seven seas and jump the seven ditches and seven hedges made of spears.

After dreaming all this the young Rajah awoke, and feeling much puzzled, got up, and sitting with his head in his hands, tried to think the matter over and discover if he had ever heard anything like this dream before; but he could make nothing of it.

Now the wooden parrots, to which Mahdeo had given life, were very wise, and as soon as the birds awoke, he told them his dream. Then the largest parrot, who was the wisest of them all, said, "This is, indeed, a strange dream, and the strangest thing about it is that it is all true. The Panch-Phul Ranee's country does, indeed, lie beyond the Red Sea, and seven other seas, and she dwells in a house built in

the centre of her father's kingdom. Around her house are seven ditches and seven hedges of spears, and she has vowed never to marry any man who cannot jump those seven ditches and seven hedges; and because she is very beautiful, many great and noble men have tried to do this, but always they have failed. The Rajah and Ranee, her father and mother, are very fond of her and proud of her. Every day she goes to the palace to see them, and they weigh her in a pair of scales. They put her in one scale and five lotus flowers in the other, and she is so delicate and fragile she weighs no heavier than the five little flowers, and so they call her the Panch-Phul Ranee. Her father and mother are very proud of this."

"I should like to go to that country and see the Panch-Phul Ranee," said the Rajah, "but I don't know how I could cross the seven seas." "I will show you how to manage that," replied the largest parrot. "I and another parrot will fly close together, I crossing my left over his right wing; so that we will move along as if we were one bird (using only our outside wings to fly with), and on the chair thus made by our crossed wings you shall sit, and we will carry you safely across the seven seas. On the way we will every evening alight in some high tree and rest, and every morning we can go on again, and as we go our size

and strength will grow according to what is needed. "That sounds a good plan ; I have a great desire to try it," said the Rajah.

"Very well," said the parrot, "if you truly wish to go, there is no reason why we should not set out to-day ; but first let us eat." So the parrots went out and brought in some food, and they all ate. Then the largest parrot, and the next largest spread their wings so that two of their wings crossed. The Rajah had already made ready a bundle of clothing and had taken all the money he had in the house, and now he seated himself on the crossed wings, and the parrots flew away with him.

Far, far, far they flew, as fast as parrots can fly, over hills, over forests, over rivers, over valleys, on, on, on, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, only staying to rest every night when it got too dark to see where they were going. At last they reached the seven seas which surrounded the Panch-Phul Ranee's country. When once they began crossing the seas, they could not rest (for there was neither rock nor island on which to alight), so they were obliged to fly straight across them, night and day, until they gained the shore.

By reason of this the parrots were too exhausted on their arrival to go as far as the city where the Rajah, Panch-Phul Ranee's father, lived, but they flew

down to rest on a beautiful banyan tree, which grew not far from the sea, and close to a small village. The Rajah determined to go into the village and get food and shelter there. He told the parrots to stay in the banyan tree till his return; then, leaving his bundle of clothes and most of his money in their charge, he set off on foot toward the nearest house.

After a little while he reached a Malee's cottage, and giving a gold mohur to the Malee's wife, got her to provide him with food and shelter for the night.

Next morning he rose early, and said to his hostess, "I am a stranger here, and know nothing of the place. What is the name of your country?" "This," she said, "is Panch-Phul Ranee's country." "And what is the last news in your town?" he asked. "Very bad news, indeed," she replied. "You must know our Rajah has one only daughter—a most beautiful Princess—and her name is Panch-Phul Ranee, for she is so light and delicate that she weighs no heavier than five lotus flowers. After her this whole country is called Panch-Phul Ranee's country. She lives in a small bungalow in the centre of the city you see yonder; but, unluckily for us, she has vowed to marry no man who cannot jump on foot over the seven hedges made of spears, and across the seven great ditches that surround her house. This cannot be done, Babamah! I don't know how many Rajahs

have tried to do it and have died in the attempt! Yet the Princess will not break her vow. Daily, worse and worse news comes from the city of fresh people having been killed in trying to jump the seven hedges and seven ditches, and I see no end to the misfortunes that will arise from it. Not only are so many brave men lost to the world, but, since the Princess will marry no one who does not succeed in this, she stands a chance of not marrying at all; and if that be so, when the Rajah dies there will be no one to protect her, and claim the right to the kingdom. All the nobles will probably fight for the Raj, and the whole kingdom be turned topsy-turvy."

"Mahi," said the Rajah, "if that is all there is to do, I will try and win your Princess, for I can jump right well."

"Baba," answered the Malee's wife, "do not think of such a thing; are you mad? I tell you hundreds of thousands of men have said these words before, and have been killed for their rashness. What power do you think you possess to succeed where all before you have failed? Give up all thought of this, for it is utter folly."

"I will not give it up," answered the Rajah, "but before I make the attempt I am going to consult some of my friends."

So he left the Malee's cottage and returned to

the banyan tree to talk over the matter with the parrots. His plan was that they should carry him on their wings across the seven ditches and seven hedges made of spears. When he reached the tree, the old parrot said to him, "It is two days since you left us; what news have you brought from the village?" The Rajah answered, "The Panch-Phul Ranee still lives in the house surrounded by the seven ditches, and seven hedges made of spears, and is still keeping her vow to marry no man who cannot jump over them; but, cannot you parrots, who brought me all the way over the seven seas, carry me on your wings across these great barriers?"

"Of course, we could," replied the larger parrot, "but what good would that do you? To be carried over is not the same as jumping over, and the Princess would no more agree to marry you then than she would now. No, this is a thing in which we cannot help you, but still it is possible that if you try you may succeed. Do you not remember that when you were a little boy, you were taught to jump by conjurors and tumblers?" (for the parrot knew all the Rajah's history). "Now is the time to make use of all they taught you."

"You have spoken wisely," said the Rajah, "and it may well be that I will succeed where others have failed. At any rate, I shall try." And so saying he

set out for the city, which he reached by nightfall. Early the next morning he went to where the Princess' bungalow stood, to try and jump the fourteen great barriers. He was strong and agile, and he jumped the seven great ditches, and six of the seven hedges made of spears; but in running to jump the seventh hedge he hurt his foot, and, stumbling, fell upon the spears and was pierced through and through.

A little later Panch-Phul Ranee's father and mother arose, and, as always, the first thing they did was to look out toward their daughter's bungalow. There they saw something transfixed upon the seventh row of spears, but they could not make out what it was, for there was a light about it so that it dazzled their eyes. Then the Rajah called his Wuzeer and said to him, "For several days I have not seen any come to try to jump the seven ditches and the seven hedges, but now there is something there upon the seventh row of spears, but I cannot see what it is because it is so bright." The Wuzeer answered, "That is a Rajah's son, who has failed like all who have gone before him." "But how is it," asked the Rajah "that he thus dazzles our eyes?"

"It is because he is so beautiful," replied the Wuzeer. "Of all who have died for the sake of Panch-Phul Ranee, this youth is, beyond doubt, the handsomest." "Alas!" cried the Rajah, "how many

and how many brave men has my daughter killed? I will have no more die for her. Let us send her and this poor young Rajah away together into the jungle."

Then he ordered his servants to fetch in the young Rajah from where he lay, and when the old Rajah saw him, he marvelled at his beauty, and he said, "Oh pity, pity, that so brave and handsome a boy should have come dying after this girl! Yet he is but one of the many who have died thus to no purpose. Pull up the spears and cast them into the seven ditches, for they shall remain no longer."

Then he commanded two palanquins to be prepared and men to be in readiness to carry them, and said, "Let the girl be married to the young Rajah, and let both be taken far away into the jungle, that we may never see them more. Then there will be quiet in the land again."

The Ranee, Panch-Phul Ranee's mother, cried bitterly at this, for she was very fond of her daughter, and she begged her husband not to treat her so cruelly, but the Rajah would not heed her prayers and weeping. He had his daughter married to the young Rajah as he had said, and then he put her in one palanquin, and her husband in the other; and he told the palkee-bearers to carry them out to the deepest and wildest part of the jungle, and leave them there.

This was done, and now Panch-Phul Ranee felt that all hope was gone, and that nothing was left for her but to perish there alone in the jungle. Night was coming on, and it was growing darker and darker. The only light was the light of the young Rajah's beauty, that shone like that of a star. Panch-Phul Ranee went still nearer to look at him, and as she looked, she wondered, for he was, indeed, the handsomest Prince in all the world, and she cried, "Alas! how I could have loved him! And now he has perished, and I have lost him through my own fault."

And now the wild beasts that live in the jungle began to come out in search of prey. The Princess could hear them howling, but none of them came near her to harm her because of the light. Then towards morning they all went back to their dens, and were silent, and two little jackals came and hid in a hole close by. There they began to talk together, and the little lady jackal said to her husband, "Dear me! how tired I am from all our running about in search of bones. Do tell me a story to amuse me before we go to sleep." The other answered, "What people you women are for stories! Well, look just in front of you; do you see those two?" "Yes," she answered, "what of them?" "That woman you see sitting on the ground," he said, "is the Panch-Phul Ranee." "And what son of a Rajah is the man in

the palkee?" asked she. "That," he replied, "is a very sorrowful son. His father was so unkind to him that he left his own home, and went to live in another country very far away from this; and there he dreamed about the Panch-Phul Ranee, and came to our land in order to marry her, but he was killed in jumping the seventh hedge of spears, and all he gained was to die for her sake."

"That is very sad," said the first little jackal; "but could he never by any chance come to life again?" "Yes," answered the other, "maybe he could, if only some one knew how to give him the proper remedies." "What are the proper remedies, and how could he be cured?" asked the lady jackal.

(Now all this talk had been heard by Panch-Phul Ranee, and when the lady jackal asked this, she listened eagerly for the answer.)

"Do you see that tree over there beyond the rocks?" replied the other jackal. "If some of its leaves were crushed and a little of the juice put on the Rajah's lips and temples, and on the place where the spear wounded him, he would at once come to life again, and be as well as ever."

At this moment day dawned, and the two little jackals crawled further back into the cave and went to sleep. Panch-Phul Ranee did not forget their words, however. She, a Princess born, who had never

put her foot to the ground before (so delicately and tenderly had she been reared), walked over the rough clods of earth and the sharp stones till she reached the place where the tree grew of which the jackals had spoken. She gathered a number of its leaves and, with hands and feet that had never before done coarse or common work, beat and crushed them down. They were so stiff and strong that it took her a long time. At last, after tearing them, and stamping on them, and pounding them between two stones, and even biting the hardest parts, she rolled them up in a corner of her saree and managed to squeeze a little of the juice through it onto her husband's temples, and on his upper lip, and some also on the place where the spear had wounded him. And when she had done this, he awoke as if he had been only sleeping, and sat up, wondering where he was. Before him stood Panch-Phul Ranee shining like a glorious star, and all around them was the dark jungle, and he cried aloud, "Is it possible that you are Panch-Phul Ranee, for whose sake I tried to leap the seven ditches, and the seven hedges of spears? But you must indeed be she, for no one else in all the world could be so beautiful. Ah, Princess! You were very cruel to me." "I was, indeed," she answered, "but as it was through my fault you died, it was through me that you were brought back to life again; and now you are my hus-

band, for we were married to each other before they brought us here into the jungle," and she told him the whole story.

Then the Rajah was even more astonished and the Princess begged him to come back with her to the palace where her father and mother would welcome him as a son. But the Rajah answered, "Not so, first I wish to return to my own home for awhile, for though my father cares nothing for me, my mother loves me dearly, and I know she must have wept many bitter tears for my sake. After I have seen her, we will return to your father's palace, and will live there."

To this Panch-Phul Ranee agreed, and they set out to find the place where her husband had left the parrots. This took them a long time, for the jungle was very wide and the way was rough. But at last they came to the banyan tree where the parrots were. Then the largest parrot called out to the Rajah, "You were away so long that we feared you would never return. Why were you so careless as to trip and get killed upon the spears? If it had not been for the Princess, you might not be alive even now. It has been very tiresome to have to wait so long for you."

"I am very sorry," said the Rajah, "that I kept you waiting. But at any rate I am here at last, and with the Princess as my wife; and now I hope that

you will carry us both back to my father's kingdom, for I long to see my mother once more and to have her know of my happiness."

"Yes, we will do that," answered the parrot, "but you had better get some dinner first, for it is a long journey across the seven seas."

So the Rajah went to a village close by, and bought food for himself and Panch-Phul Ranee, and after they had eaten, they mounted upon the parrots' wings, and the parrots flew with them across the seven seas, across the Red Sea, on, on, on a whole year's journey, until they came to the young Rajah's father's kingdom. There they alighted at the foot of the palace gardens; but the Rajah did not know it was his father's palace, for he had been away so long that everything was changed; and the parrots did not know it either. They had only alighted there to rest.

Now soon after this a little son was born to Panch-Phul Ranee, and he was a beautiful child; but the Rajah was grieved because there was no shelter for the Ranee mother and the little Prince. And he said to his wife, "See! There is smoke rising from behind the trees over in that direction, and not far away. I will go and get some fire to cook with, and food for you, and I will ask what kingdom this is and where I can find a shelter for you. Do not be

afraid, for I will soon return." And Panch-Phul Ranee answered, "Go, but do not stay long, for I am troubled when you are not with me." So the Rajah set out again promising to come back as quickly as possible.

Now the smoke he had seen was from the fires of a camp which belonged to some conjurors and dancing people. When the Rajah came there, he found it a much larger place than he had supposed; quite a good-sized village, in fact. In all the tents and houses, the people were busy, some dancing, some singing, and others practising their conjuring tricks or beating the drum, and all seemed joyous and happy.

When the conjurors saw him, they were amazed at his beauty, and they said, one to another, "How well he would look beating the drum for the dancers!" And they determined to keep him with them if they could.

But the Rajah knew nothing of this. He went into the largest hut, and said to a woman who was grinding corn, "Baba, give me a little rice, and some fire from your hearth."

"That you shall have," said the old woman, and she got up to fetch the burning sticks he asked for; but before giving them to him, she threw upon them some magic powder, so that as soon as the Rajah

smelled the smoke that rose from them, he forgot everything that had happened in all his life before, his home and his mother and the parrots, and even his wife and child. Then the conjurors said, "Why go away? Why should you not remain here, and become one of us?" "Very well," answered the Rajah, "I will do so, for I am sure I have no other place to go." So he stayed there with the conjurors and dancing people and he beat the drum for them, and knew of no other life than theirs.

In the meantime, Panch-Phul Ranee waited and watched for him all day long. The parrots had flown away in search of food so that she was there alone, and she became so troubled that at last she fainted away with grief and weariness.

Now it happened that the old Rajah's first wife (that is, the young Rajah's mother) had lately lost her youngest son, and she was very sad about it, so that she wept day and night. Some of her women happened to be in the garden when Panch-Phul Ranee fainted, and coming by that way, they saw her lying there as if she had no life, and with the child beside her. And they took up the child, and hastened back to their mistress, and showed it to her, and said, "See what a beautiful child we found out in the garden. Surely, heaven has sent it to you to comfort you for the child you lost." Then the Ranee

questioned them, and they told her the whole story, but the child was so beautiful, and so like her eldest son who was Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, that she could not bear to give it up, and took no pains to find the mother, and learn whether she were still alive.

Meanwhile, a Malee's wife had gone to the garden to gather flowers, as she often did in the cool of the mornings and evenings. She had wandered in search of them, as far as the jungle at the bottom of the garden, and then she found Panch-Phul lying, still pale, and without breath or motion.

The good woman felt very sorry for her, and began to rub the Ranee's cold hands, and she gave her sweet flowers to smell, so that after a while the young Ranee revived and opened her eyes. Seeing the Malee's wife, she said, "Where am I? Has not my husband come back yet? And where is my baby?"

"My poor lady," answered the Malee's wife, "I do not know where your husband is. I am the wife of the Malee who lives near here, and coming to the garden to gather flowers, I found you lying here on the ground, but there was no baby with you."

Then the Ranee began to weep, and she said, "Alas! some one must have stolen my child while I lay there, knowing nothing." And she grieved bitterly. But the Malee's wife took the Princess home with her, and comforted her as best she could, and

Panch-Phul Ranee lived there with the good woman for fourteen years, and in all that time she learned nothing of her husband or her child. The boy, meanwhile, grew up in the palace, and became a very handsome youth. One day he was wandering round the garden and chanced to pass the Malee's house. The Panch-Phul Ranee was sitting within watching the Malee's wife cook their dinner.

The young Prince saw her, and calling the Malee's wife, said to her, "What beautiful lady is that in your house? And how did she come there?" She answered, "Little Prince, what nonsense you talk! There is no lady here." He said again, "I know there is a beautiful lady here, for I saw her as I passed the open door." She replied, "If you come telling such tales about my house, I'll punish you well." For she thought to herself, "Unless I frighten him, the boy will go talking in the palace about what he's seen, and then perhaps some of the people from there will come and take the poor Panch-Phul Ranee away from my care." But whilst the Malee's wife was talking to the young Prince, the Panch-Phul Ranee came from the inner room to listen to what was going on, and no sooner did she see the young Prince than she could not forebear crying out, "Oh, how like this youth is to my husband! The same eyes, the same shaped face and the same king-like bearing! Can he

be my son? He is just the age my son would have been had he lived."

The young Prince heard her speaking and asked what she said, to which the Malee's wife replied, "The woman you saw, and who just now spoke, lost her child fourteen years ago, and she was saying how like you were to that child, and thinking you might be the same; but she is wrong, for we know you are the Ranee's son." Then Panch-Phul Ranee herself came out of the house, and said to him, "Young Prince, I could not, when I saw you, help exclaiming you are so like my lost husband and so exactly what my son might be if he were living now; it is exactly fourteen years since I lost them both." And she told him how she had been a great Princess, and was returning with her husband to his own home, and how the parrots had stopped there to rest and a child had been born to her, and her husband had gone away to seek shelter for her and the child, and fire and food, and had never returned; and also she told how, when she had fainted away, some one had stolen her baby from her; and, how the good Malee's wife had befriended her, and had taken care of her ever since. And when she had ended her story, she began to weep.

But the Prince said to her, "Be of good cheer; I will try to find your husband and child for you; who

knows but that I may indeed be your son, beautiful lady?" And running home to the old Ranee (who was his grandmother), he said to her, "Are you really my mother? Tell me truly; for this I must know before the sun goes down." "Why do you ask foolish questions?" she replied, "Have I not always treated you as a son?" "Yes," he said, "but tell me the very truth, am I your own child, or the child of some one else whom you have taken for your own? If you do not tell me, I will kill myself." And so saying, he drew his sword. She replied, "Stay, stay, and I will tell you the whole truth. One time, fourteen years ago, I was very sad, for I had lost a little son whom I loved dearly. Then my women found a baby lying beside a woman who had fainted in the garden down by the jungle, and they brought it to me, and the child was so beautiful, and I loved it so dearly that I kept it, and that child was you. As for the lady, I never heard of her again from that day to this."

The young Prince, on hearing this, said, "There is in the head Malee's house a beautiful lady, whom the Malee's wife found in the jungle, fourteen years ago; that must be my mother. Let her be received here this very day with all honor, for that is the only amends you can ever make to her now."

The Ranee consented, and the young Prince went

down to the Malee's house himself to fetch his mother to the palace.

With him he took a great retinue of people, and a beautiful palanquin for her to ride in ; he also took costly things for her to wear, and many jewels and presents for the good Malee's wife.

When Panch-Phul Ranee found that this beautiful young prince was, indeed, her son, and that she was to go to the palace and live there and see him and speak with him every day, she could hardly believe in her happiness.

She put on the jewelled robes her son had brought her, and came out from the Malee's house, and when the people saw her they marvelled at her beauty, and cried out that never before had there ever been so noble-looking a queen in the whole world.

Her son took her back with much pomp and state to the palace and did all in his power to honor her ; and there she lived for some time and was happy in the love of her son ; but she still grieved for her husband, and often wept bitter tears.

Then one day the young Prince begged her to tell him again, from the beginning, the story of her life, and as much as she knew of his father's life ; and so she did. After that, he said to her, " Be no longer sad, dear mother, over my father's fate ; for I will send into all lands to gather news of him, and maybe in

the end we shall find him." And he sent people out to hunt for the Rajah all over the kingdom, and in all neighboring countries—to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west—but they found him not.

At last, after four years of searching, and when there seemed no hope of ever learning what had become of him, Panch-Phul Ranee's son came to see her, and said, "Mother, I have sent into all lands seeking my father, but can hear no news of him. If we only knew in which direction he went, there would still be some chance of tracing him. Do you not remember his having said anything of the way which he intended to go when he left you?" She answered, "When your father went away, his words to me were, 'I will go to fetch food for us both, and fire to cook it with, and inquire what this country is, and seek out a place of shelter for you. Do not be afraid—I shall soon return.' That was all he said, and then he went away, and I never saw him more."

"In what direction did he go from the foot of the garden?" asked the Prince. "He went," answered the Panch-Phul Ranee, "toward that village of conjurors close by. I thought he meant to ask some of them to give us food. But had he done so, he would certainly have returned in a very short time."

"Do you think you should know my father,

mother darling, if you were to see him again?" asked the Prince. "Yes," answered she, "I should know him again." "What!" he said, "even though eighteen years have gone by since you saw him last? Even though age and sickness and want have changed him?" "Yes!" she replied, "I have loved him, and love him still, so tenderly that I would know him again anywhere or in any disguise."

"Then let us," he said, "send for all the people living in the conjurors' village. It may be they have detained him among them even to this day. It is but a chance, but we can hope for nothing more certain."

So the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son sent down orders to the conjurors' village that every one of the whole band should come up to the palace that afternoon—not a soul was to stay behind. And the dancers were to dance and the conjurors to play all their tricks for the amusement of those living in the palace.

The people came. The nautch girls began to dance—running, jumping and flying here, there and everywhere, some up, some down, some round and round. The conjurors conjured and all began in different ways to amuse the company. Among the rest was one wild, ragged-looking man, whose business it was to beat the drum. No sooner did the Panch-Phul Ranee set eyes on him than she said to her son, "That is your father?" "That wretched-looking

man who is beating the drum?" he cried. "Even that man," she answered.

Then the Prince said to his servants, "Fetch that man here." And the Rajah came toward them, so changed that not even his own mother knew him—no one recognized him but his wife. For eighteen years he had been among the nautch people; his hair was rough, his beard untrimmed, his face thin and worn, sunburnt and wrinkled; he wore a nose-ring and heavy ear-rings, such as the nautch people have and his dress was a rough, common cumlee. All traces of his former beauty seemed lost. They asked him if he did not remember he had been a Rajah once, and about his journey to Panch-Phul Ranee's country. But he said, "No," he remembered nothing but how to beat the drum—Rub-a-dub! tat-tat! tom-tum! tom-tum! He thought he must have beaten it all his life.

Then the young Prince gave orders that all the nautch people should be put into jail until it could be discovered what part they had taken in bringing his father to such a wretched state. He also sent for all the wisest doctors in the kingdom, and said to them, "Do your best to restore the health of this Rajah, who seems to have lost both memory and reason; and find, if possible, what has caused these misfortunes to befall him." The doctors said, "He has

certainly had some potent charm given to him, which has destroyed both his memory and reason, but we will do our best to bring him back to himself again."

And this they were able to do. Their treatment succeeded so well that, after a time, the Rajah entirely recovered his former senses. And they took such good care of him that in a little while he regained his health and strength also, and looked almost as well as ever.

He then found to his surprise that he, Panch-Phul Ranee, and their son, had all this time been living in his father's kingdom. His father was so delighted to see him again that he was no longer unkind to him, but treated him as a dearly beloved, long-lost son. His mother also was overjoyed at his return, and they said to him, "Since you have been restored to us again, why should you wander any more? Your wife and son are here; do you also remain here, and live among us for the rest of your days." But he replied, "In that country where the Carpenter was so kind to me, I have left nine hundred and ninety-eight talking wooden parrots, which I greatly prize. Let me first go and fetch them."

They said, "Very well; go quickly and then return." So he mounted the two wooden parrots which had brought him from the Panch-Phul Ranee's country (and which had for eighteen years lived in the

jungle close to the palace), and returned to the land where he had stayed with the Carpenter, and fetched thence the nine hundred and ninety-eight remaining wooden parrots. Then his father said to him, "Do not have any quarreling with your half-brother after I am dead (for his half-brother was son of the old Rajah's favorite wife). I love you both dearly, and will give each of you half of my kingdom." So he divided the kingdom into two halves, and gave the one half to the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, who was the son of his first wife, and the other half to the eldest son of his second, but favorite wife.

A short time after this arrangement was made, Panch-Phul Ranee said to her husband, "I wish to see my father and mother again before I die; let me go and see them." He answered, "You shall go, and I and our son will also go with you." So he called four of the wooden parrots—two to carry himself and the Ranee, and two to carry their son. Each pair of parrots crossed their wings; the young Prince sat upon the two wings of one pair, and on the wings of the other pair sat his father and mother. Then they all rose up in the air, and the parrots carried them (as they had before carried the Rajah alone), up, up, up, on, on, on, over the Red Sea and across the seven seas, until they reached the Panch-Phul Ranee's country.

Panch-Phul Ranee's father saw them come flying through the air as quickly as shooting stars, and much wondering who they were, he sent out many of his nobles and chief officers to inquire.

The nobles went out to meet them, and called out, "What great Rajah is this who is dressed so royally, and comes flying through the air so fast. Tell us, that we may tell our Rajah."

The Rajah answered, "Go and tell your master that this is Panch-Phul Ranee's husband, come to visit his father-in-law." So they took that answer back to the palace, but when the Rajah heard it, he said, "I cannot tell what this means for the Panch-Phul Ranee's husband died long ago. It is twenty years since he fell upon the iron spears and died; let us, however, all go and discover who this great Rajah really is." And he and his court went out to meet the new-comers, just as the parrots alighted close to the palace gate. The Panch-Phul Ranee took her son by the one hand and her husband by the other, and walking to meet her father, said, "Father, I have come to see you again. This is my husband who died, and this boy is my son." Then all the land was glad to see the Panch-Phul Ranee back, and the people said, "Our Princess is the most beautiful Princess in the world, and her husband is as handsome as she is, and her son is a fair boy; it is our

will that they should always live among us and reign over us."


When they had rested a little, the Panch-Phul Ranee told her father and mother the story of all her adventures from the time she and her husband were left in the palkees in the jungle. And when they had heard it, her father said to the Rajah, her husband, "You must never go away again; for see, I have no son but you. You and your son must reign here after me. And behold all this great kingdom will I now give you, if you will only stay with us; for I am old and weary of governing the land."

But the Rajah answered, "I must return once again to my own country, and then I will stay with you as long as I live."

So, leaving the Panch-Phul Ranee and her son with the old Rajah and Ranee, he mounted his parrots and once more returned to his father's land. And when he had reached it, he said to his mother, "Mother, my father-in-law has given me a kingdom ten thousand times larger than this. So I have but returned to bid you farewell, and then I must go back to live in that other land." She answered, "Very well; so you are happy anywhere, I am happy too."

He then said to his half-brother, "Brother, my father-in-law has given me all the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, which is very far away; therefore, I give up

to you the half of this kingdom that my father gave to me." Then, bidding his father farewell, he went back, riding through the air on two of the wooden parrots, and followed by the rest to the Panch-Phul Ranee's country, and there he and his beautiful Princess and his son lived very happily all their mortal days.

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